

fine Cooking

SEPTEMBER 2006 NO. 80

FOR PEOPLE WHO LOVE TO COOK

how to: **make the best potato salads**

**a relaxed
grilling
menu**

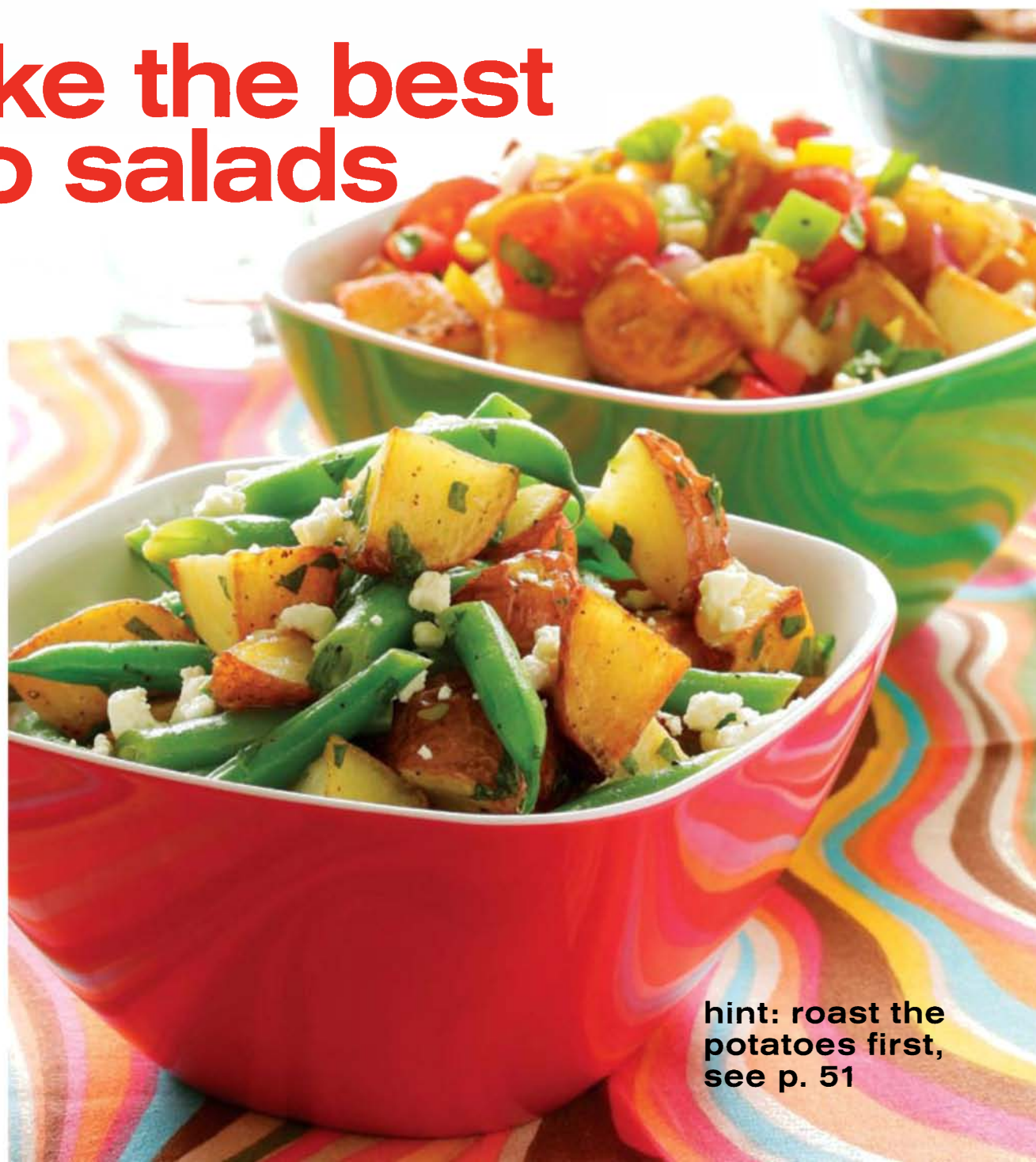
**12 new
ideas for
tomatoes**

**strawberry
lemonade**

**tips for the
freshest
slaws**

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**hint: roast the
potatoes first,
see p. 51**

your teriyaki

grilled pork chops with tropical papaya salsa

4 take Kikkoman Teriyaki-grilled pork and top with a unique salsa to create a bold, colorful work of art you can eat.



papaya salsa ingredients

- 1 cup chopped ripe papaya or mango
- 1/2 cup chopped fresh pineapple
- 1/2 cup chopped strawberries or one kiwi, peeled and chopped
- 1 small jalapeño pepper, seeded and finely chopped
- 2 tbsp chopped fresh cilantro leaves
- 1 tbsp fresh lime juice
- 2 tbsp toasted coconut flakes

tropical papaya salsa

- 1 In medium bowl, combine papaya or mango, pineapple, strawberries or kiwi, jalapeño pepper, cilantro and lime juice. Cover and refrigerate up to 24 hours before serving.
- 2 Stir in coconut just before serving.

pork chop ingredients

- 4 boneless pork loin chops, each about 1-inch thick
- 1/2 cup Kikkoman Teriyaki Marinade & Sauce
- 1 tbsp sugar
- 2 tbsp pineapple juice

grilled pork chops

- 1 Place pork in large plastic food storage bag.
- 2 Combine teriyaki sauce, sugar and pineapple juice; pour over pork. Press air out of bag; close bag securely. Turn bag over several times to coat pork. Refrigerate 4 to 6 hours, turning bag over occasionally.
- 3 Remove pork from marinade; discard marinade. Grill pork 4 to 5 inches from hot coals 7 minutes on each side, or until pork is just done.
- 4 Serve pork with Tropical Papaya Salsa. (serving for 2 shown)



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AUGUST / SEPTEMBER 2006 ISSUE 80



RECIPE FOLDOUT

86c Quick & Delicious
"Small plates" for sharing



ON THE COVER

50 Roasted Potato Salads



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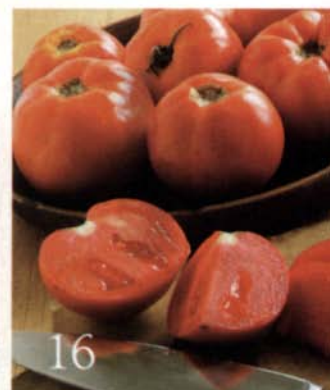
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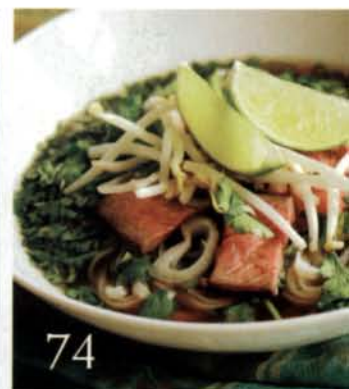
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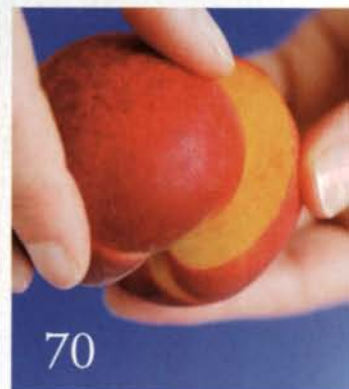
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Panzanella



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- ◆ QUICK
Under 45 minutes
- ◆ MAKE AHEAD
Can be completely prepared ahead but may need reheating and a garnish to serve
- ◆ MOSTLY MAKE AHEAD
Can be partially prepared ahead but will need a few finishing touches before serving
- ◆ VEGETARIAN
May contain eggs and dairy ingredients



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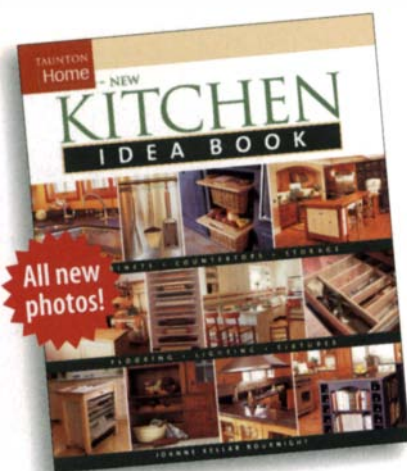
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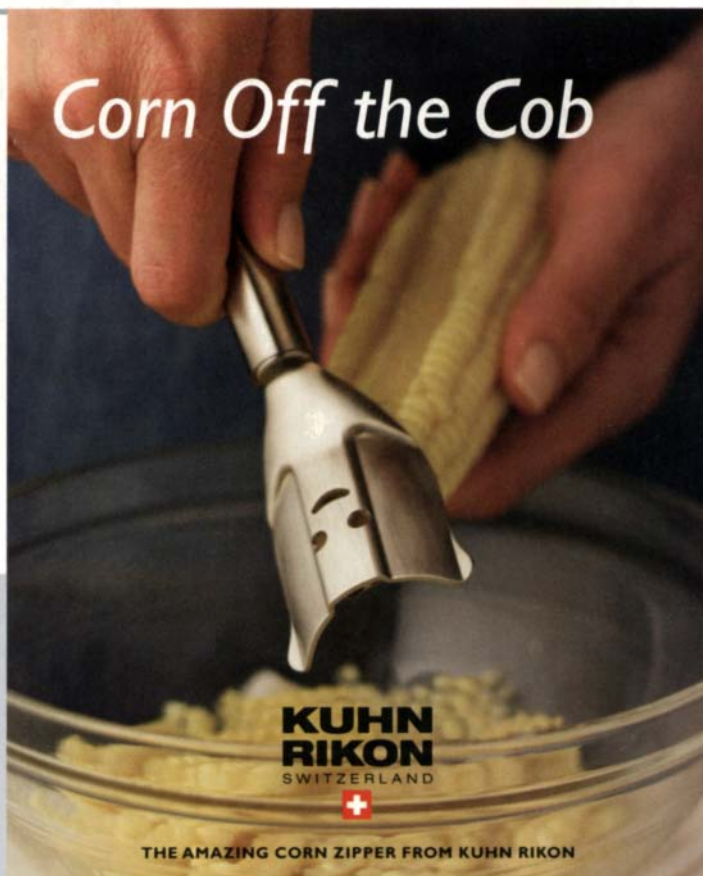
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keeping it simple

The weather may be hot, but that doesn't have to keep you from having people over for dinner. As long as you keep things uncomplicated, it really is possible to serve a terrific meal without breaking a sweat. Pair a flavorful main course with a simple side dish and maybe an easy dessert, and your guests will be more than happy. Here are seven ideas to get you started; each meal is big on flavor and easy on the cook. (And for a terrific all-on-the-grill menu, turn to "A Taste of Tuscany in Your Own Back Yard," on p. 34.) Just be sure to check the recipe yields, as you may need to double or halve recipes to suit your needs.

A cocktail party

Pan-Fried Halloumi with Fennel, Olive & Mint Compote, p. 86c

Bruschetta with Herbed Tomatoes, p. 36, and Rosemary-Garlic Oil, p. 36

Grilled Steak Kebabs with Ginger & Garlic, p. 86c

A light brunch buffet

Smoked Salmon & Pea Fritters, p. 86c

Rustic Beefsteak Tomato Tart, p. 17

Blueberry Cornmeal Cake, p. 69

Five easy dinner pairings

Roasted Potato Salad with Shaved Fennel & Salsa Verde, p. 52

New York Strip Steak with Sweet Pepper-Chorizo Butter, p. 44

tip: You can make the chorizo butter up to a week ahead.

to drink: A spicy Shiraz such as the 2005 Little Penguin Shiraz featured on p. 23 would be perfect.

Spinach and Grilled Radicchio Salad, p. 38

Shrimp & Cannellini Salad with Tarragon Vinaigrette, p. 86c

tip: Use a vegetable peeler to shave the Parmigiano-Reggiano for the spinach salad.

to drink: Try a light, crisp Sauvignon Blanc, like Gallo Family Vineyards Twin Valley Sauvignon Blanc.

Asian-Style Slaw with Green Mango, p. 48

Star Anise & Rosemary Rib-Eye Steak, p. 45

tip: Make quick work of the slaw by slicing the ingredients in a food processor.

to drink: Look for an intensely flavored red with concentrated fruit and robust tannins, such as a Cabernet Sauvignon, a Cabernet blend, or an old-vines Shiraz.

Etta's New Crab Cakes, p. 63, with Red-Eye Cocktail Sauce, p. 63

Roasted Potato Salad with Bell Peppers, Roasted Corn & Tomatoes, p. 50

tip: You can assemble the crab cakes a day ahead and pan-fry them right before serving.

to drink: Try a juicy rosé, like Bonny Doon's Big House Pink.

Grilled Chicken with Tomato, Lime & Cilantro Salsa, p. 86c

Simple Roasted Potatoes, p. 51

tip: Make the salsa and grill the chicken while the potatoes roast.

to drink: Pink Lemonade, p. 59.

Dessert

doesn't have to be a hassle. The grilled figs with ice cream and honey, p. 40, couldn't be simpler to whip up at the last minute. And if you have time to plan ahead, you can make a cake topped with summer fruit, p. 66, over the weekend and serve it with pride later in the week.

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from the editor

Cooking for two or twenty

My lovable South American relatives who came to stay a few weeks back have all flown home. No more cheffing up nightly dinners for 16, making three kinds of eggs for breakfast, or thinking of clever leftover ideas for lunch. I don't even have an excuse to buy that surprisingly delicious little Shiraz in a box I'd gotten used to drinking. I'm sad.

Nothing I like better than cooking for a crowd, especially those characters, who are great fun and seem to like everything I cook. Though come to think of it, that might have something to do with all the wine we serve them before we eat.

But with summer here and the latest issue of *Fine Cooking* in hand, I have a new excuse to gather my friends and get cooking. This issue has lots of great ideas for casual entertaining, whether you're cooking for a small soccer team or just hosting your next-door neighbors for lunch. Here are some of my favorites:

Jessica Bard's lovely and unfussy "small plates" in the Quick & Delicious pullout on p. 86c. I love the concept—cook a selection of dishes that look great on platters and are easy to eat in small portions. Then set them out for guests to graze on as they please, drinks in hand.

Tony Rosenfeld's crowd-pleasing Tuscan menu. I love the finishing burst of flavor that Tony's rosemary oil gives to the chicken, sausage, and sage skewers (p. 37).

Tom Douglas's crab cakes with a side of one of Allison Ehri's crisp, juicy slaws. Not only are Tom's crab cakes (p. 63) light and fresh-tasting, but they're served with a dynamite "red-eye" cocktail sauce. Pair them with the crisp and tangy Buttermilk Herb Slaw on p. 48.

And don't forget summer's hardest-working ingredient—juicy ripe tomatoes. The easiest and maybe the most delicious summer side dish is a platter of sliced beefsteak tomatoes sprinkled with sea salt and drizzled with olive oil. But if you have a little time, we've got a dozen more ideas for tomatoes throughout the magazine, including a savory tart (p. 17), a Grilled Sourdough Panzanella (check out the back cover), and my cherry tomato gratin, at right. (The *Fine Cooking* staff kids me that I'll turn anything into a gratin, so I promise this is the last gratin recipe from me for a while—until I write that *101 Great Gratins* cookbook.)

Enjoy the summer.

—Susie Middleton, editor



Garlicky Cherry Tomato Gratin

Serves four to six as a side dish.

I like to use a combination of cherry tomato varieties for great flavor and color. This is a perfect destination for those cute baskets of Sweet 100s on display at your farmers' market. Don't be tempted to use grape tomatoes, as their texture isn't as pleasing as that of cherry tomatoes.

3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, plus more for oiling the dish

1 teaspoon minced fresh garlic

2 tablespoons fresh orange juice

1 teaspoon balsamic vinegar

1¾ pounds small red and yellow cherry tomatoes, halved (about 4½ cups)

1 teaspoon lightly chopped fresh thyme, plus ¼ teaspoon whole leaves

Kosher salt

1½ cups fresh breadcrumbs

Heat the oven to 350°F. Lightly oil a shallow 1½-quart baking dish (a ceramic gratin dish is nice; the shallower the better). In a small (preferably nonstick) skillet, heat 2 tablespoons of the olive oil over medium-low heat. Add the minced garlic and cook until it softens and becomes fragrant (but does not brown), about 1 minute. Remove from the heat and let cool. Add the orange juice and balsamic vinegar and stir.

In a mixing bowl, combine the halved tomatoes with the garlic-oil mixture, the chopped thyme, and ½ teaspoon kosher salt; stir well. Spread evenly in the gratin dish.

In another bowl, mix the breadcrumbs with the remaining 1 tablespoon olive oil, whole thyme leaves, and ¼ teaspoon kosher salt until well combined. Cover the tomatoes with the crumb mixture.

Bake until the crumbs are nicely golden, 50 to 60 minutes. By this time, the juices will have been bubbling around the edges for some time. The tomatoes will be tender but not completely broken down. The longer you bake the gratin, the more flavorful it will be as the juices will reduce, but don't allow the crumbs to burn.



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Fiesta Shrimp Appetizer

Ingredients

1 jar CROSSE & BLACKWELL® Zesty Shrimp or Seafood Sauce
2 8-ounce packages cream cheese, softened
1 pound cooked shrimp, chopped
1/2 cup Kalamata olives, pitted & chopped
1/2 red bell pepper, chopped
1 bunch green onions, chopped
1 jalapeno chile pepper, seeded & minced

Directions

Spread cream cheese over a large platter; top with Shrimp Sauce. Sprinkle with remaining ingredients. Cover and chill until served.



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Ingredients

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1 cup sliced peaches
1/2 cantaloupe, cut into 1" pieces
1/2 cup CROSSE & BLACKWELL® Mint Flavored Apple Jelly

1/2 cup mayonnaise
2 tablespoons white vinegar
lettuce

Directions

Toss together blueberries, peaches and cantaloupe. Heat Jelly over low heat until texture is smooth. Whisk mayonnaise and vinegar into Jelly; blend until smooth. Place lettuce in a large serving bowl; top with fruit; drizzle with dressing and serve immediately.



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Mango Chutney Stir Fry

Ingredients

1 jar CROSSE & BLACKWELL® Hot Mango Chutney
2 tablespoons hot chili oil
1 pound fresh jumbo shrimp, peeled & deveined
1 cup pea pods
1 cup onions
1 teaspoon garlic, chopped
1/2 cup stir-fry sauce
2 tablespoons cashews

Directions

Heat chili oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Fry shrimp for 3 minutes or until pink. Remove shrimp from pan. Add pea pods, onions and garlic to skillet along with stir-fry sauce and sauté for 5 to 10 minutes. Add Chutney and the cooked shrimp. Heat through. Sprinkle with optional cashews and serve.



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from our readers

A Fine Cooking family feast

I had to laugh when my sister showed up for Easter dinner yesterday with all the elements of her yet-to-be-constructed cake—and the issue of *Fine Cooking* from which she'd taken the recipe (#78). There I was in the kitchen with my stack of dog-eared *Fine Cookings*, sticky notes holding the pages with all the recipes for the rest of the dinner. The Stuffed Leg of Lamb with Red Onion Jam came from #71, the potatoes from #70, the wilted arugula salad from #77, and the Classic American Dinner Rolls, which have become a staple of our holiday dinners, from #6 (1994).

So it was clearly a *Fine Cooking* Easter, which is really no surprise since *Fine Cooking* is always the first place I look for delicious, uncomplicated recipes. Keep up the good work.

—Molly Smillie, via email

The dish on stemware

In *Fine Cooking* #78, I was pleased to see your informative and succinct couple of pages on stemware. ("Enjoying Wine," p. 22). However (in my not-so-humble opinion), it contained a glaring omission. Schott Zwiesel has a line of beautifully designed titanium crystal stemware—very thin and exceptionally clear but durable enough for the dishwasher. Its Web site has a video demonstration of just how remarkably tough they are. A set of six glasses from the Forté line is available at BestWineglass.com for \$60, including shipping.

—Ray Sly, via email

Frosting on the cake

Your article on buttercream cakes in *Fine Cooking* #78 ("A Piece of Cake," p. 64) was perfectly timed. My husband's birthday is in April, and I am always looking for something new to serve as a treat for his special day. The cake recipe was easy to follow and utterly delicious. Since my husband is a big fan of lemon, I made that variation of the buttercream icing. I have never in my life tasted an icing as light and airy. To up the lemon quotient, I made some lemon curd and used that instead of jelly between the layers.

I was thrilled with how easy the cake was to bake and frost, and he was ec-

static with his birthday treat. Thanks so much for making this year so easy for me and so perfectly enjoyable for him.

—Patty Woodland,
Manahawkin, New Jersey

And about that cake

The letter from the editor in *Fine Cooking* #78 amused me. Such hyperbole about cake. What's the big deal? Cake is OK. Icing, not usually. I'm more of a main-meal kind of person. Still, the photos were stunning. And I love whipped cream. And strawberries. So I made one. Wow! And another, with icing. "No! You didn't! You ate the last piece?" And another. And another. My pants are getting tight. I'm irritable when only crumbs are left on the cake plate. My family can't get me out of the kitchen to do other things (though, to be honest, they aren't trying very hard). It won't be long before I'll be standing up at a group meeting: Hi. I'm a cake-a-holic.

You never disappoint. Keep the surprises coming.

—Daniela Gutlin, via email

Mercury in canned tuna

I was disappointed in The Tasting Panel on canned tuna in *Fine Cooking* #79 (p. 90). I didn't see any comment about my top concern: mercury contamination. I have all but stopped eating tuna in any form because of the lack of labeling available in my local stores. A simple Google search will tell you how important this issue is for women and children.

—Laurel Ferris, Edina, Minnesota

Editors' reply: We agree that high levels of methylmercury in canned tuna, as well as in some other fish, is an important health issue, especially for young children, pregnant and breastfeeding women, and women who are planning to become pregnant. If you're in one of these high-risk groups, we encourage you to monitor your tuna consumption. For specific guidelines on how much canned tuna is considered safe to eat and how often, visit www.cfsan.fda.gov/seafod1.html or www.nrdc.org/health/effects/mercury/tuna.asp. ♦

^{fine}Cooking

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In this issue, *Fine Cooking* contributing editor **Tony Rosenfeld** shares a rustic menu for the grill ("A Taste of Tuscany in Your Own Back Yard," p. 34), inspired by the big-hearted, laid-back entertaining style of legendary Italian cooking instructor Giuliano Bugialli. When Tony isn't busy writing articles and developing recipes for *Fine Cooking*, you just might find him behind the grill at one of his healthful fast-food restaurants in Boston.



Tony Rosenfeld



Allison Ehri



Joanne Weir

Bruce Aidells ("Great Steaks from the Skillet," p. 41) is the founder of the Aidells Sausage Company. Bruce is one of the country's foremost authorities on meat. He's coauthor of *The Complete Meat Cookbook*, and his most recent book is *Bruce Aidells's Complete Book of Pork*. He lives in Berkeley, California.

For this issue, *Fine Cooking* food stylist and test kitchen associate **Allison Ehri** promised us slaw recipes that are light, crunchy, tangy, and juicy all at once. And her story, "A Fresh Take on Slaw" (p. 46), certainly delivers; her delicious slaws make perfect summer side dishes or condiments (try them in wrap sandwiches or on burgers). Before joining the staff of *Fine Cooking*, Allison worked as a freelance recipe tester, developer, and writer for several national food magazines.

When **Joanne Weir** ("Roasted Potato Salads," p. 50) isn't dreaming up new variations on the American potato salad, she travels the world teaching cooking. She's the author of several cookbooks, including *From Tapas to Meze* and *Weir Cooking in the City*, which won a James Beard award and is the companion to her PBS television

series of the same name. Before embarking on a career as a culinary instructor and cookbook author, Joanne worked for five years in the kitchen of Chez Panisse, in Berkeley, California, and spent a year studying with master cooking instructor Madeleine Kamman.

Martha Holmberg ("The New Ratatouille," p. 54) likes many things about her new hometown, Portland, Oregon, but one of her favorites is the fabulous farmers' markets. "Summer's slow in starting out here, but once the sun kicks in, we have fantastic produce through October or longer. And there's a market somewhere in town almost every day of the week." Martha, the former editor in chief and publisher of *Fine Cooking*, is now the food editor of *The Oregonian* newspaper.

Fine Cooking contributing editor and resident pastry guru **Abigail Johnson Dodge** ("Pink Lemonade," p. 58, and "Simple Summer Fruit Cakes," p. 66), cut her teeth as a pastry chef both in the United States and in France. She has written many cookbooks, including *Great Fruit Desserts*, *Williams-Sonoma: Dessert*, and most recently, *The Weekend Baker*.

A crab-cake lover from way back, chef **Tom Douglas** ("Crab, Shrimp, Salmon," p. 60) owns four top Seattle restaurants that have helped to define the Northwest style (a.k.a. Pacific Rim cuisine), borrowing from many cultures and using the best and freshest ingredients of the Pacific Northwest. In this issue, he shares his secrets for making his famous crab cakes, as well as delicious shrimp and salmon cakes.



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in season

Juicy, ripe Beefsteak tomatoes are one of summer's most flavorful gifts

BY RUTH LIVELY

It's only when I can dig my teeth into that very first slice of thick, juicy beefsteak tomato that I know summer is really in full swing. Beefsteak tomatoes are the greatest gift of this season; I love to savor their sweet, intense flavor with nothing more than a sprinkle of salt and a drizzle of olive oil. When you have truly good tomatoes, you don't need much else.

What's in a name

I can't think of a better word than "beefsteak" to describe these meaty, succulent tomatoes when they're sliced. But beefsteak isn't a botanical term. Any of several varieties of large tomatoes with thick, plump flesh can be called beefsteaks. And not all beefsteak varieties are huge. Although many produce fruit weighing well over a pound (I've grown some that weighed more than four pounds apiece), there are some varieties that weigh less. A beefsteak has smaller seed cavities and therefore a greater ratio of flesh to juice and seeds than other kinds of tomatoes. Then there's shape. Beefsteak varieties are typically—though not always—slightly flattened (*oblate*, in botanical terms) and sometimes lumpy, with a slightly irregular shape. We're so used to perfectly shaped supermarket tomatoes that many of us consider an imperfect shape undesirable. That couldn't be less

true. The tomatoes that look the ugliest, including beefsteaks, are often the best tasting.

Where to get great beefsteaks

As a gardener, I'm a firm believer that the most flavorful tomatoes are homegrown, but I realize not everyone can manage that. The next best place to get great tomatoes is at a farm stand or a farmers' market, while the supermarket is where you're least likely to find a tasty tomato—although some grocery stores do carry beefsteaks now. (Supermarket tomatoes are usually picked too soon and never achieve the full flavor and texture of vine-ripened fruits.) When shopping for tomatoes, I go for those with intact skins and no bruises, firm but yielding under gentle pressure, and with a deep color. Of course, color is a useful indicator only if you already know what color the variety should be when it's ripe.

Don't refrigerate

Leave tomatoes at room temperature until you're ready to use them. Refrigeration causes loss of flavor and a mealy texture.

Grow the best beefsteak varieties

There are loads of beefsteak varieties, some hybrids and some heirlooms. Beefsteaks offer a great diversity of color when ripe: from red and pink to orange, yellow, purple, green—even white. You won't find this kind of selection at regular grocery stores, so try growing some of the following varieties. (For where to buy seeds, see p. 80).

Big Beef

If I could grow only one plant, it would be a Big Beef tomato. Besides having wonderful rich flavor, these globe-shaped red fruits lack the deeply set stem and large core you often find in beefsteaks, which means they're prettier when sliced and there's less waste.

Beefmaster

Meaty, great-tasting, and disease-resistant, this was my favorite tomato until the

Big Beef was introduced. Its bright red fruits weigh up to 2 pounds.

German

There's a whole family of heirloom varieties named German this or that. The one that's performed best for me is German Stripe (or Striped German). It has large orange and red fruits and a luscious, old-fashioned tomato flavor.

Brandywine

The classic Brandywine is a pink tomato, but there are also black, yellow, and red Brandywines. They have creamy flesh and rich flavor, but be warned: The plants don't produce many fruits.

Aunt Ruby's German Green

This is a popular heirloom variety with sweet, spicy flavor. When ripe, its moderately large, round fruits are striped green and yellow. —R. L.

Rustic Beefsteak Tomato Tart

Serves eight to ten.

This freeform tomato tart makes a great appetizer, lunch, or light supper. Use the best-tasting, locally grown farmstand beefsteak tomatoes you can lay hands on.

FOR THE CRUST:

9 ounces (2 cups) unbleached all-purpose flour
¼ cup freshly grated Parmigiano-Reggiano (about ½ ounce)
1 tablespoon chopped fresh thyme
¼ teaspoon table salt
¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
⅛ teaspoon ground cayenne
5½ ounces (11 tablespoons) cold unsalted butter, cut into ½-inch cubes
5 to 6 tablespoons ice water

FOR THE FILLING:

1½ pounds ripe beefsteak tomatoes
Kosher salt
1½ cups freshly grated Parmigiano-Reggiano (about 3 ounces)
4 tablespoons roughly chopped pitted oil-cured black olives or Kalamata olives
12 large basil leaves, thinly sliced
2 teaspoons capers, drained and patted dry, roughly chopped if large
Freshly ground black pepper
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

Prepare the crust and tomatoes: Combine the flour, cheese, thyme, table salt, pepper, and cayenne in a food processor and pulse to blend thoroughly. Add the butter and pulse until the pieces are about the size of rice grains. Add the ice water through the feed tube, 1 tablespoon at a time, while pulsing in short bursts until the dough starts to come together. It may still look crumbly, but if you press it with your fingers, it should become compact. Don't add more water than is necessary to get the dough to cling together. Turn it out onto a clean work surface and, using your hands, press and gather the dough into a rough ball. Put the ball on a sheet of waxed paper, gently shape it into a flat disk, and wrap it tightly. Refrigerate for at least 45 minutes.

Meanwhile, core (but don't peel) the tomatoes and slice them ¼ inch thick. Sprinkle with ½ teaspoon kosher salt, stack them in a colander set over a bowl, and let drain for at least 45 minutes and up to 1 hour. About every 15 minutes, turn the slices gently and tilt the colander to let the juices drain freely.



Assemble and bake: Position a rack in the center of the oven and heat the oven to 425°F. Cut a piece of parchment to fit a rimmed baking sheet (preferably a heavy-duty one) and put the baking sheet in the freezer to chill. Take the dough out of the refrigerator and let it warm until pliable, about 10 minutes. Sprinkle the parchment lightly with flour. Roll the dough on the parchment into a 14-inch round that's ⅛ inch thick. It's fine if the dough extends a little beyond the parchment. Transfer the parchment and dough to the chilled baking sheet and refrigerate for 15 minutes.

Remove the dough from the refrigerator and let it sit at room temperature for about 5 minutes to keep it from cracking. When filling the dough, work steadily without delays. Sprinkle two-thirds of the cheese over the center of the dough round, leaving a 2-inch-wide band around the edges. Scatter half the olives and half the basil over the cheese and arrange the tomato slices on top so they overlap slightly, making a solid layer. Sprinkle on the remaining basil and olives, the capers, and the rest of the cheese. Season with pepper and drizzle the olive oil over the filling. Fold the edges of the pastry over the edge of the filling, pleating it as you go so it forms a neatly fitting round edge. Bake until the dough is lightly browned, turning the pan halfway through baking, about 40 minutes total. Carefully transfer the tart from the parchment to a rack and let it rest for at least 30 minutes before cutting and serving.

Leftovers keep well at room temperature for a day or two. Reheat for 10 to 15 minutes at 350°F.

What to do with all those tomatoes

Here are some ideas for using fresh beefsteak tomatoes:

Add a twist to the classic BLT by replacing lettuce with arugula, bacon with prosciutto, and plain mayonnaise with green mayonnaise. To make green mayonnaise, stir some puréed herbs, like basil, cilantro, chives, and parsley and some grated garlic into homemade or your favorite store-bought mayonnaise.

Other simple sandwich combinations include Cheddar, tomato, and a thin slice of red onion on rye; or tomato, watercress, mayonnaise, and black pepper in a pita pocket.

For a beautiful salad platter, lay out slices from various colors of beefsteak tomatoes and drizzle with a tasty vinaigrette. This could be as simple as balsamic vinegar and good-quality extra-virgin olive oil, or a thick Dijon-spiked emulsion of olive oil and red-wine vinegar speckled with minced herbs, or even a dollop of pesto thinned to pouring consistency with olive oil and a touch of vinegar.

For a quick, fresh pasta sauce, roughly chop a large beefsteak tomato and toss with hot pasta, plenty of grated cheese, pitted olives, and lots of herbs.

For a late-summer breakfast treat, add fat slices of fried tomato to a plate of eggs and bacon. Fry the tomatoes briefly on both sides in a little olive oil just until they blister and color slightly.

And for a terrific tomato and bread salad, see the recipe on the back cover.

Ruth Lively cooks, writes, and gardens in New Haven, Connecticut. ♦

What are the best ways to use specialty salts like fleur de sel?

—Anita Fournier, via email

A Maria Helm Sinskey responds: Fleur de sel is just one of many terrific specialty salts available; some others are pink Peruvian salt, Hawaiian red Alaea salt, and pink Australian Murray River salt. It's best to add them just before serving, where their sparkly crunch and subtle minerality really make a difference. Try sprinkling them on a raw shaved zucchini salad, a sliced pork roast, or grilled scallops. Don't use specialty salts for seasoning before cooking, or for brines, rubs, or marinades. These salts carry a high price tag, so less expensive kosher salt, table salt, or coarse sea salt is a better choice—not to mention that the delicate flavor of a specialty salt would be lost in the cooking process.

Maria Helm Sinskey oversees the culinary programs at Napa Valley's Robert Sinskey Vineyards, and is the author of The Vineyard Kitchen: Menus Inspired by the Seasons.

Have a question of general interest about cooking? Send it to Q&A, Fine Cooking, PO Box 5506, Newtown, CT 06470-5506, or by email to fcqa@taunton.com, and we'll find a cooking professional with the answer.

I buy grass-fed beef, and while the flavor is great, even the tender cuts seem to get dry and tough. Any tricks to keeping it juicy?

—Jay Sammons,
Portland, Oregon

A Shannon Hayes responds: Grass-fed beef and other types of meat come from animals that feed on pasture, which is their natural diet, rather than being fattened with grain. As a result, grass-fed meat (also called pasture-raised meat) has great flavor but less fat and therefore less buffer against drying out during cooking.

Whether you're cooking grass-fed beef, lamb, or pork, there are some easy tricks to overcome their tendency to toughen and dry out.

First, don't cook the meat beyond medium. Aiming for medium or medium-rare doneness means the meat will be juicier and more tender. The exception to this rule is ground meat, which for safety reasons, should be cooked so the center is no redder than light pink.

Second, use an instant-read thermometer to check the internal temperature. (I suggest using a realistic temperature guide, such as the one in *Fine Cooking* #53, p. 78, rather than USDA-recommended temperatures, which result in overcooked, dry meat.) There's less room for error with grass-fed meat than there is with fattier grain-fed meats.

Finally, I often cook grass-fed meat at a lower temperature than usual. Because it's leaner, grass-fed meat cooks faster. For quick-cooking thin cuts, such as steaks or

chops, I sear the meat on medium-high heat briefly to brown it, then I drop the heat to medium-low. This minimizes the loss of fat and juices as the meat reaches the desired internal temperature. (When grilling, sear briefly, then move the meat to a side of the grill that isn't lit.) With roasts, try using a technique that I call super-slow roasting, where you cook the meat at 170°F for several hours. This low heat keeps the juices inside the meat and reduces the likelihood that it will be overdone.

Shannon Hayes is the author of The Grassfed Gourmet Cookbook.

I keep eggs in the egg storage tray in my refrigerator and throw out the carton, but I often forget the expiration date. How can I tell if they're still fresh?

—Sheila Rychlik, via email

A Marie Simmons replies: The refrigerator door, where many egg storage trays are located, is subject to constant temperature fluctuation as the door opens and closes, so it's not a good place to keep eggs. To keep eggs fresh, store them in their carton on a shelf in the coldest part of the refrigerator. The carton protects the egg shells from cracking, prevents the loss of moisture (which thins egg whites and accelerates staleness), and prevents the absorption of refrigerator odors.

There's a problem with relying on a date on the egg carton: Cartons with the USDA grademark must display the date the eggs were

packed, not the date of “expiration.” Eggs can actually be stored in their carton in the refrigerator for four to five weeks beyond the packing date. But to decipher the packing date, you need to know how to read Julian dating, in which consecutive days of the year are represented by numbers; for example, 001 is January 1 and 365 is December 31. To complicate things further, eggs without a USDA grademark are dated according to individual state laws, which differ among states. A more practical way to date eggs—and a lot easier than figuring out the Julian date—is to simply write the date of purchase on the carton. To be on the safe side, try to use eggs within three weeks of purchase.

Marie Simmons is the author of The Good Egg.

What is rapid-rise yeast, and is it interchangeable with regular yeast?

—Sue Ann Molero, via email

A Peter Reinhart responds: Rapid-rise yeast, a brand name for instant yeast, is different from active dry (or dry-active) yeast in that it dissolves instantly in the dough and doesn't have to be rehydrated in warm water. Instant yeast is a slightly different strain of yeast from active dry, but when used as directed, both types raise dough in the same amount of time. Many bakers, both professional and home, are switching to instant

yeast because it's easy to add to the flour and has a long shelf life. (I keep mine in a covered plastic container in the freezer, and it's good for at least a year.)

Instant yeast isn't really “faster” than active dry yeast, but it is more concentrated. This is because the grains are smaller and drier, and none of the yeast has been killed during drying and packaging (contrasted with active dry, in which 25% of the yeast cells die during processing). For this reason, you need less of it. You can use it instead of active dry yeast as long as you adjust the amount. Here's an easy rule: Instant yeast is 25% more concentrated than active dry. That is, if a recipe calls for 1 teaspoon of instant yeast, use 1¼ teaspoons active dry. Conversely, if a recipe calls for 1 teaspoon active dry yeast, you'll need only about ¾ teaspoon instant.

Instant yeast becomes “fast rising” only if you use the extra 25% you'd use for active dry yeast. The shorter rising time, however, may have an impact on the flavor of baked goods, especially when you're working in big batches, because a faster rise (or fermentation) reduces the flavor-development period and increases the possibility of overfermentation.

Peter Reinhart wrote the revised Brother Juniper's Bread Book: Slow Rise as Method and Metaphor. He is on the faculty at Johnson & Wales University in Charlotte, North Carolina. ♦

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BY REBECCA FREEDMAN



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10 Great Summer Wine Bargains

BY TIM GAISER

It's summer, and that means the kids are out of school, vacations are on the calendar, and it's time for picnics and leisurely al fresco dinners. Summer dining is all about uncomplicated, delicious meals that are easy to prepare, and the wines you enjoy with those meals should be equally unfussy.

My idea of a good summer wine is one that's long on flavor but not heavy with oak or alcohol. Depending on what's on the menu, I opt for light-to medium-bodied, crisp whites with vibrant fruit or supple, fruity reds with moderate tannins.

I also think summer wines should be good values. With that in mind, here are ten bottles that will please almost any palate and satisfy any budget. All are widely available, and prices are suggested retail.

Master sommelier Tim Gaiser is a contributing editor to Fine Cooking. ♦



White

1 2005 Rosemount Estate Traminer Riesling, South East Australia

Price: \$8

What it tastes like: Spicy peach and apricot flavors with a burst of lime zest on the finish.

Why it's a great summer wine:

The combination of peachy fruit and mouthwatering acidity in this Gewürztraminer-Riesling blend is simply irresistible—it's like summer in a bottle.

What to pair it with: Crab cakes (for a recipe, see p. 60) or cold salmon salad.

2 2004 Hahn Estates Chardonnay, Monterey County, California

Price: \$12

What it tastes like: Pear and peach with notes of butter and spice.

Why it's a great summer wine:

Chardonnay is often overdone and overoaked, but not here. The '04 Hahn offers a perfect harmony of fruit and oak, making it a desirable partner for a wide range of foods.

What to pair it with: Grilled chicken or fish with a tropical fruit salsa (see *Fine Cooking* #79, p. 38).

3 2005 Villa Maria Sauvignon Blanc "Private Bin," Marlborough, New Zealand

Price: \$14

What it tastes like: Tart grapefruit and gooseberry flavors with pronounced herbal notes.

Why it's a great summer wine:

With citrus and herb flavors, New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc is a zesty summer white wine.

What to pair it with: Green bean salad with cherry tomatoes and herbs; pan-seared scallops with a citrus reduction.

4 2005 Michele Chiarlo Moscato d'Asti Nivole, Piedmont, Italy

Price: \$14

What it tastes like: Just-picked white peaches and strawberries with a touch of honey.

Why it's a great summer wine:

It's light, slightly sparkling, just off-dry, and very low in alcohol—in other words, it could be the perfect summer wine.

What to pair it with: Fresh fruit and fruit desserts, like strawberry crisp (for a recipe, see *Fine Cooking* #72, p. 67).



Sparkling

9 Segura Viudas "Aria" Estate Brut Cava, Spain

Price: \$10

What it tastes like: Crisp apple and citrus fruit with zesty acidity.

Why it's a great summer wine: This easy-drinking Spanish bubbly is the perfect way to start any summer meal.

What to pair it with: Oysters and other shellfish, or bruschetta with herbed tomatoes (for a recipe, see p. 36).

Pink

10 2004 Falesco Vitiano Rosé, Umbria, Italy

Price: \$10

What it tastes like: Juicy strawberries and red cherries with a touch of herbs.

Why it's a great summer wine: A chilled bottle of this dry rosé and a picnic basket were made for each other.

What to pair it with: Tuna and white bean salad.

Red

5 2005 Little Penguin Shiraz, South Eastern Australia

Price: \$8

What it tastes like: Ripe blackberry, strawberry, and spice flavors with a touch of oak.

Why it's a great summer wine: Penfolds, a maker of sophisticated wines, now makes a line of lighter, delicious, great-value wines. The Shiraz is easy drinking and perfect for cookouts.

What to pair it with: Anything from the grill: pizza, burgers, or smoky pork kebabs.

6 2004 Echelon Pinot Noir, Central Coast, California

Price: \$12

What it tastes like: Luscious Bing cherry fruit with notes of smoke and spice.

Why it's a great summer wine: Easy on the wallet and very versatile, this well-balanced Pinot Noir is delicious with most anything from the grill.

What to pair it with: Grilled ahi tuna, salmon, or chicken breasts; pasta salads (see *Fine Cooking* #65, p. 56).

7 2004 Bonny Doon Big House Red, California

Price: \$10

What it tastes like: Bright, juicy raspberry fruit with rich tannins and notes of black pepper.

Why it's a great summer wine: Juicy, youthful fruit, screw-cap packaging (easy access on picnics), and a low price make this lively wine a fantastic summer destination.

What to pair it with: Herb-marinated skirt steak or any grilled meat.

8 2003 Three Thieves Zinfandel, California

Price: \$12 for a 1-liter jug

What it tastes like: Juicy strawberry and cola-spice flavors.

Why it's a great summer wine: Many Zinfandels contain a whopping 15+% alcohol, too much for summer (or any time, in my book). The '03 Three Thieves, with a reasonable 13.5%, is a delicious summer quaff and a bargain to boot.

What to pair it with: Pan-fried steaks (for recipes, see pp. 41-45) or barbecued ribs.

Mizuna greens

Shishito peppers

Menegi green onions

Shiso leaves

Kabocha squash

Japanese Vegetables on American Soil

BY LAURA GIANNATEMPO

While shopping at a Japanese market in New York City in the early '80s, Ken Suzuki was surprised by the run-of-the-mill quality of the produce—in spite of sky-scraping prices. With an extensive background in farming, he knew he could do better. More important, he saw an opportunity to realize a lifelong dream: having a farm of his own.

What brought Ken to the United States in the mid '70s was his unusual training as a “chick sexer,” the highly specialized profession of identifying the gender of just-hatched chicks. But when new methods for

gender identification gained ground, things got tough, and Ken decided to make his foray into hand-farmed Japanese produce.

On his small Suzuki Farm near Delmar in Delaware (he recently moved the farm from Maryland's eastern shore), he grows a variety of Japanese greens and vegetables, from shiso leaves, mizuna greens, and minuscule menegi green onions—favored by Japanese chefs to season sushi—to Japanese eggplant, mild and sweet shishito peppers, and yuzu, a tart citrus fruit.

Ken likes to slice shiso leaves, whose flavor is a unique combination of minty and

nutty, and toss them in salads or with soba noodles. He roasts shishito peppers with a little olive oil and seasons them with soy sauce and cracked black pepper, and cooks kabocha squash just like butternut: halved or cut into chunks and roasted.

Through the years, Ken has developed a following among chefs and markets in Washington, Philadelphia, and New York, who cherish his flavorful, carefully tended vegetables—many of which are organic.

For more information, call the farm at 302-846-0283. ♦

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what's new

Get a charge out of grating

Necessity may be the mother of many an invention, but it was irritation that inspired this credit card-size garlic grater. After shredding his fingertips one too many times while grating garlic and ginger, a Swedish chef cast aside his metal grater and tried rubbing a clove of garlic over the embossed surface of his credit card. Pleased with the

results—a smooth purée, no scraped fingers, and no pesky crevices to clean—he teamed up with a designer, and the rest is history. The GarlicCard (which grates fresh ginger, too) comes in an array of colors and sells for \$6 at ScandinavianDetails.com.



Bye-bye kitchen twine

Forget that tangle of twine—these reusable silicone “strings” let anyone truss a roast with the grace of a butcher. Just slide one end of the cord through the other, pull it snug, and it locks in place—no knot required. Oven-, freezer-, microwave-, and dishwasher-safe, the Foodloop sells for \$14.95 (for a set of six strings) at SurLaTable.com.

worth owning

Vegetable grill basket



No summer cookout is complete without a big batch of smoky-sweet grilled vegetables. But, honestly, threading veggies onto skewers is a bit of a hassle. Using a grill basket is much easier, and the veggies will cook more evenly as you toss them around. Simply chop or slice your vegetables, put them into the basket with whatever oil and seasonings you like, and stir occasionally. Cooking.com sells the Weber grill basket, at left, for \$24.95.

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BY KIMBERLY Y. MASIBAY

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Building, remodeling, or upgrading? Every home improvement project requires making tough decisions that involve big dollars and choices you'll live with for years.

That's why there's *Smart Choices* from the editors of *Inspired House*. This special issue is designed to help you make informed purchases – *solutions that work for you* – when deciding on home products: countertops, cabinetry, floor coverings, windows, patio doors, and more. And it answers questions



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7 ways to cook with a cast-iron skillet

Peek into the kitchen of many a *Fine Cooking* contributor and you'll see a glossy black cast-iron skillet parked on the stove. Author Bruce Aidells prefers a cast-iron skillet for searing steaks (pp. 41–45), and we use ours for a zillion other things. Here are some of our favorites.

1. **Pan-frying** chicken or potatoes.
2. **Stir-frying** on the grill or campfire.
3. **Slow-sautéing** vegetables, especially onions and peppers.
4. **Cooking bacon** (it seasons the pan as it cooks).
5. **Sear-roasting** just about anything (the pan goes from stovetop to oven with ease).
6. **Baking** cornbread.
7. **Toasting** nuts, seeds, and spices.

Cast-iron 10¼-inch skillets are available for about \$14 at LodgeMfg.com. Lodge also sells seasoned pans for a little more.

Cast Iron 101

Season it right

Cast iron is porous, so new pans need to be "seasoned" with oil to keep foods from sticking. For the initial seasoning, most manufacturers recommend coating the pan with a bit of shortening and baking for an hour or more. Here's how:

Heat the oven to 350°F. Meanwhile, heat your pan on the stovetop until hot. With a thick wad of paper towels, spread 1 to 2 teaspoons of lard, bacon grease, or solid vegetable shortening all over the inside and outside of the pan. Apply a very thin coating of fat—too much grease and you'll end up with a gummy residue in your pan.

Put the pan upside down on the center rack of the oven for 1½ hours. (Slide a baking sheet or piece of aluminum foil onto the rack beneath the pan to catch any drips.) Turn off the heat and let the pan sit in

the oven until cool. The pan won't be deep black right away but will develop a dark patina with regular use.

Preserve the patina

Once the pan is seasoned, it's quite simple to maintain. Some say that washing cast iron destroys the seasoning; these folks prefer to just wipe the pan clean, using coarse salt as an abrasive for cooked-on residue. From our experience, though, that's often not enough. So in the *Fine Cooking* test kitchen, we wash our cast iron with soap and water and immediately towel it dry. Next, we set it on a burner on medium heat until the pan is hot and completely dry. While the pan is still hot, we use a paper towel to spread a thin coating of vegetable oil on the interior. With this extra attention, our cast iron stays perfectly seasoned.

—Jennifer Armentrout,
test kitchen manager

what are they?

Pie irons

Toasted cheese sandwiches are always great, but they're extra special when you make them over a campfire—and a pie iron is the right tool for the job. No mere campfire-cooking gimmick, these hinged cast-iron cookers actually turn out terrific sandwiches.

To use a pie iron, simply lay a slice of buttered bread, butter side down, on one half of the iron. Add savory or sweet fillings—cheese, cured meats, jam, fruit, chocolate, etc.—top with a second slice of buttered bread, butter side up. Close the iron and cook for a couple minutes over a hot fire.

The models shown here are manufactured by Rome Industries, which makes pie irons in several other shapes as well.

Round Jaffle Iron

(\$19.95 at BroadwayPanhandler.com)

This model crimps the bread and seals the fillings inside a crisp, buttery toast pocket. White sandwich bread is ideal for round jaffles, but feel free to experiment with other kinds. You can also cook cornbread batter or biscuit dough in the pie iron.

Panini Iron

(\$29.95 at BroadwayPanhandler.com)

This design doesn't crimp the bread in classic jaffle fashion; instead, it compresses the sandwich as it toasts. For panini, artisan bread works best.



object of desire

KWC Waterstation

In my kitchen, there's a nice deep sink with a roomy butcher block alongside it where I do all my prep work. Until recently, I'd been happy with this set-up. But then I saw the KWC Waterstation and everything changed.



What is it?

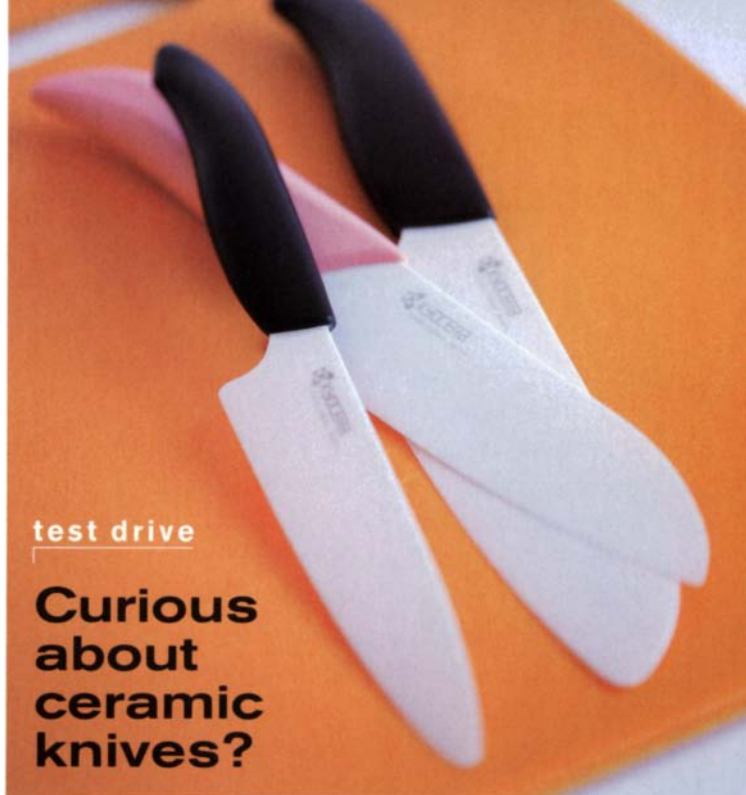
Basically it's a food-prep station with multiple sinks and work surfaces arranged around a rotating central faucet. I like it best as a freestanding island, but it's also available as a built-in corner or counter unit. The ample base cupboard can hold heaps of pots and pans—or even a dishwasher drawer.

What's so great about it?

Apart from the obvious charms of its steel surfaces and mahogany cutting boards, the Waterstation is a model of space efficiency. Three or four cooks can gather 'round and work without stepping on one another's toes, or a solo cook can tackle several tasks at once. The Waterstation comes with a variety of fitted colanders, bowls, trays, and cutting boards—all designed to slide next to, over, and under one another, so that you can arrange your work station just the way you like it. The unit also works as an entertaining station and would make a stunning centerpiece for an outdoor kitchen.

What's the damage?

With a price tag of \$12,000 for the free-standing island (\$5,700 for the top only), it's a major splurge. But if a big indoor or outdoor kitchen project is in your future, why not add it to your wish list? To find a retailer near you, visit KWCamerica.com.



Perhaps you've seen ceramic knives and wondered if you should get one. I have, too, and to answer the question, I recently tried out Kyocera's 6¼-inch chef's knife as well as the 5½-inch santoku knife, using them for everything from slicing tomatoes to chopping herbs.

Although the white blades have a disarming, plastic-like appearance, these knives are incredibly sharp and precise. And while they didn't excel at every task, when they were good, they were very, very good.

For straightforward slicing and dicing, these small Japanese knives outperformed my stainless-steel chef's knife. The thin ceramic blades made it a breeze to finely dice onions, bell peppers, and even small shallots; carve steak; and slice squishy, ripe tomatoes—the ultimate test of a knife's sharpness. Cutting a filet of salmon was so effortless that my dreams of becoming a sushi master were momentarily rekindled. Just as impressive, the knives held their edge with little sign of dulling, despite frequent use.

For bulky items, though, I wasn't comfortable with the delicacy of the ceramic blades. When

From left: Kyocera's 6-inch Revolution Chef's Knife (FK-160-WH), \$79.95; 5-inch slicing knife (FK-130-WH), \$59.95; and 5½-inch santoku knife (FK-50-SE), \$69.95, at Mingspantry.com.

Do use a ceramic knife for slicing and dicing fruits, vegetables, and boneless meats.

Don't use a ceramic knife for carving, prying, boning, cutting frozen foods, or slicing cheese.

dicing raw beets, potatoes, and squash, I missed the sturdiness and heft of my regular chef's knife. And when chopping herbs and mincing garlic, I couldn't achieve the rocking motion I'm accustomed to. Also, the blades are fragile—I accidentally dropped one of the knives and its tip snapped off.

After putting the knives to the test, it became clear that a ceramic knife should complement my steel knives, not replace them. I'll be reaching for my ceramic knife any time a recipe calls for something finely diced or thinly sliced.

—Tony Rosenfeld, contributing editor

review

manual
citrus juicers

BY MARYELLEN DRISCOLL

This time of year, lemons and limes become indispensable. Grilled chicken and fish, salads, fresh fruits and vegetables, and cold drinks all benefit from a bright hit of citrus juice. But when you're paying 50 cents for what amounts to 3 tablespoons of juice (or less for limes), a good manual citrus juicer—one that wrings out every last drop—can be as essential as the fruit itself.

Within the simple category of manually operated juicers, there's a surprising range of affordable options—handheld reamers, all-in-one juicers, squeezers, and funnels. We tried more than 30 models that are currently on the market. And after squeezing our way through several cases of lemons, limes, and oranges, we learned that each style of juicer has its unique strengths—if, that is, you use the best model within each class, shown at right.

juicing tip:

To get the most juice, soften the citrus fruit by pressing down on it with your palm and rolling it back and forth along a countertop.

This weakens cell walls and makes it easier to extract the juice.



Reamers

We like reamers. They're inexpensive, they don't take up much drawer space, and (assuming you have a good one) they are most apt to eke every bit of juice from a citrus half. No matter how well designed the reamer's cone, however, you still have to work it—pressing, twisting, and circling the cone inside the lemon or lime half to break up the flesh so that the juice spills out. It also requires rustling up a strainer (for seeds and pulp) and a dish (for capturing the juice).

OUR FAVORITE:

The classic wooden reamer
\$3 at Cookswares.com

We tried a lot of different reamers sporting modern features like ergonomic and gel-grip handles and sleek, stainless-steel cones. But none juiced like this unassuming classic. Its pointed tip makes it easy to sink the reamer into the citrus half, and the fruit's flesh readily submits to the sharply edged ribs.

Shape matters

How we tested

For this review, we tested 31 manual citrus juicers (ten reamers, ten all-in-one juicers, nine squeezers, and two funnels). Our favorite juicers were able to consistently extract 1½ tablespoons or more from a lemon half and 1 tablespoon from a lime half with relative ease (squeezers a little less). We gave less emphasis to how well they juiced oranges.



Good design

The best reamers have a well-defined point and pronounced ridges and valleys that tear and shred the citrus flesh.



Not so good

Reamers with more rounded features tend to slip and mash the fruit, leaving a lot of juice untapped.



All-in-one juicers

This type of juicer, which features a built-in strainer and cup to catch the juice, is especially nice when we need more than just a couple tablespoons of juice for a recipe. An added advantage is that you can put your weight into it by pushing down on the citrus half and twisting it around the cone. That's helpful when you have a not-so-ripe lemon or lime. None of the cones in this category, however, could juice a citrus half as swiftly as our favorite wooden reamer.

OUR FAVORITE:

Oxo Good Grips citrus juicer
\$12.99 at Oxo.com

We frequently use this juicer in our test kitchen. A reversible cone insert (a small one for lemons and limes, a large one for oranges and small grapefruit) has a unique open-space design between the ribs that creates a smooth feel while efficiently extracting juice. Markings on the cup (albeit only in ounces) are handy for measuring, and, unlike a lot of such juicers, the cone stays in place while you pour.



Juicing funnels

Funnels are a relatively new tool for juicing. Push the serrated and notched stainless-steel tube into the whole fruit, and the juice (seed-free) pours out the end. They're great when you need just a squirt of juice—leave the funnel in place until the next time you need juice—but they can also extract all the juice from a lemon or lime. Oranges proved too big for this tool, no matter how much we wiggled and prodded the serrated tube around the inside of the fruit.

OUR FAVORITE:

Screwpull model BW-112
\$17.99 at KitchenKapers.com

Unlike the other funnel model we tried, this one didn't leak, and with a little maneuvering it extracted as much juice as a reamer. Just make sure you "soften" the fruit before juicing (see the tip at far left).



Squeezers

A squeezer works like a giant garlic press. Place a citrus half in it, cut side down, and clamp down the handles. All in one squeeze, the fruit collapses and turns inside out while the juices flow out and the seeds and flesh stay behind. It takes a little muscle, but the process is tidy, and no acidic juices drip down your hands. On the downside, a squeezer, unlike a good reamer, will never extract every last drop of juice from a citrus half.

OUR FAVORITE:

Williams-Sonoma Two-in-One citrus squeezer
\$20 at Williams-Sonoma.com

We vastly prefer the squeezers that are designed for specific citrus fruits—lemons, limes, or oranges. All-purpose squeezers tend not to juice as well. But who wants three kinds of juice squeezers taking up room in the utensil drawer? This new squeezer is the near-perfect solution. It has two ridged bowls in one squeezer; a small one for limes nests within a larger one for lemons. ♦



Winning tip

Perfect grilled onions with poultry lacers

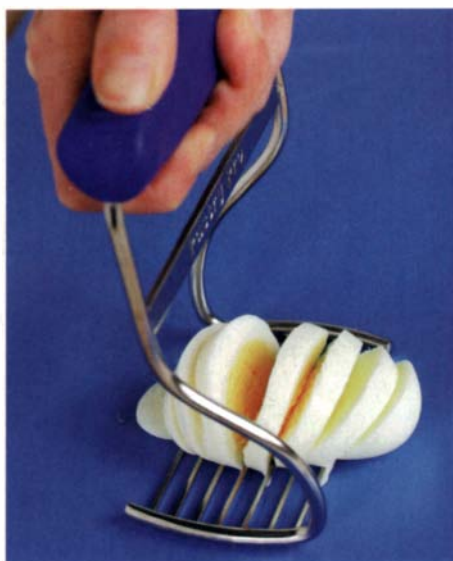
Sliced onions have a tendency to fall apart when you grill them. To keep grilled onion slices whole, I insert several metal poultry lacers through an uncut onion at regular intervals. Then I slice the onion between the lacers, so that each slice has a lacer in it, and grill the slices following my favorite recipe. I pull out the lacers before serving.

—Sue Straughan, Denver, Colorado

A prize for the best tip

We want your best tips—we'll pay for the ones we publish—and we'll give a prize to the cleverest tip in each issue. Write to Tips, *Fine Cooking*, PO Box 5506, Newtown, CT 06470-5506 or email fctips@taunton.com.

The prize for this issue's winner: Boos Block cutting board and chop block from John Boos & Co.; value, \$135.



Slice eggs with a pastry cutter

I use a pastry cutter to slice hard-boiled eggs for egg salads. I get nice, even slices with only one hand motion for each egg.

—Sharon Curtis, via email

Keep cookies longer with sugar

When storing freshly baked cookies, I find that I can extend their keeping time by sprinkling a teaspoon of sugar on the bottom of the container. Then I line the

container with parchment or paper towels, put the cookies on top, and close the lid. The sugar absorbs moisture and keeps the cookies crisp and fresh.

—Barbara Adams,
Howard Place, South Africa

Remove silk from corn cobs in no time

Fresh corn on the cob is delicious in summer, but the silk can be tedious to remove. I found that the last threads are quickly burned off by turning the cob over a gas flame for a few seconds. The kernels are scarcely heated, and the blackened silk can be brushed off easily.

—Margaret Preckel,
West Lafayette, Indiana

Use sun-dried tomato oil in marinades

When I have leftover oil from oil-packed sun-dried tomatoes, I use it to make a marinade for fresh vegetables before grilling them. The oil gives the vegetables a pleasant sun-dried-tomato flavor.

—Stephanie Sherman,
Watertown, Massachusetts



A grapefruit spoon seeds cucumbers

When a recipe calls for seeding a cucumber, I use a grapefruit spoon. I cut the cucumber in half lengthwise and run the spoon along the center. Its grooved head removes the seeds in one swift move.

—Meredith Koplinka, via email

Multiple uses for a fish poacher

I use my fish poacher for cooking many foods other than fish. Because the pan is long and roomy, it's perfect for boiling lasagna noodles and corn cobs and for steaming long vegetables, such as asparagus.

—Barbara Mathers-Nash,
Needham, Massachusetts

Add leftover pickle juice to salad dressings

I use cider vinegar to make dill pickles every year. Instead of throwing away the pickling liquid, I save it and add a few teaspoons to a salad dressing in place of vinegar. It gives the dressing a nice flavor, and I don't waste all that good juice.

—Kim Langen, Holmfied, Manitoba

save cereal bags and use them...

...as waxed paper

I always save the bags lining the inside of cereal boxes and use them instead of waxed paper. I cut along the side and bottom of the bag to straighten it out and use the sheet to wrap cheese or other leftover foods. In a pinch, it's a great substitute. Don't use them to line cake pans, though, as the plastic might melt.

—S. Aronson, Montreal, Québec

...to pound meat

I save the empty liner bags of cereal boxes and use them instead of plastic wrap to pound meat. I cut off the bottom and along one side of the bag to obtain a flat, rectangular sheet and lay it on top of the meat. It saves plastic wrap and works just as well.

—Beth Haines, Guelf, Ontario



Olive oil dispenser doubles as dish soap container

I fill a glass olive oil dispenser with blue or orange dishwashing liquid (yellow soap could be mistaken for olive oil). Because the dispenser's spout is designed to provide good control over the amount of liquid being poured, you never use more soap than you need to. Plus the glass dispenser looks much nicer than the soap's original plastic container.

—Nancy Gold, Lexington, Massachusetts

Prevent freezer burn on ice cream

Whenever I have leftover ice cream, I put plastic wrap over the open container, press it down against the ice cream, and put the lid on tightly. This helps prevent freezer burn and keeps the ice cream fresh longer.

—Hazel Schoem,
N. Potomac, Maryland

Freeze semifirm cheese before grating

Grating semifirm cheeses, such as Gruyère, Fontina, or Cheddar can be messy, especially if they're at room temperature. So I put the cheese in the freezer for 10 to 15 minutes to make it firmer and easier to grate.

—Vi Eckardt, Sarasota, Florida

Keep shrimp cocktail chilled

I often serve shrimp cocktail at parties. To ensure that the shrimp stay chilled, I fill my serving bowl halfway with water a couple of hours ahead and put it in the freezer. When ready to serve, I arrange the shrimp over the ice. (Be sure to use a freezer-proof serving bowl; glass and ceramic may crack.)

—Judy Tinkham, via email ♦



dinner with friends

Head outdoors for
a relaxed feast of
chicken skewers,
bruschetta, and
salads—all cooked
on the grill

A Taste of Tuscany

Photos: Scott Phillips



menu

Bruschetta with
Herbed Tomatoes

Tuscan Grilled
Chicken, Sausage
& Sage Skewers

Fregola with
Grill-Marinated
Red Peppers
& Zucchini

Spinach & Grilled
Radicchio Salad

Grilled Fresh Figs
with Ice Cream
& Honey

BY TONY ROSENFELD

I've learned all sorts of fancy preparations from working in French restaurants over the years, but when I'm at home, I make simple rustic dishes with an Italian flair.

The cuisine of Tuscany, where I trained for a little while, is the antidote to overambitious entertaining. Tuscans buy good ingredients and let them shine by preparing them simply. It's the perfect approach, especially now when farmers' markets overflow with the summer harvest. Just bring home some ripe vegetables, meats, and bread and light up the grill for a dinner with a Tuscan flair.

Center the meal around skewers of herbed chicken, sausage, and sage. I learned to make these grilled skewers (Italians call them spiedi) from

in Your Own Back Yard

Italian cooking master Giuliano Bugialli. But where Bugialli grilled Tuscan quail on a magnificent indoor hearth, I cook rich boneless chicken thighs on my outdoor grill. I thread chicken, sausage, and sage onto metal skewers, brush with rosemary-garlic oil, and cook slowly, flipping often, over a moderate fire so that the flavors meld and the meat picks up some smokiness.

A simple tomato bruschetta is the perfect starter. While it's easy to gussy up this simple concoction of bread, oil, and tomatoes with all sorts of cheeses, olives, or pestos—why bother? Great summer tomatoes need little adornment.

Round out the meal with a pair of grilled salads. For a warm pasta salad, I toss grilled, marinated zucchini and peppers with fregola, tiny pasta rounds from Sardinia. Fregola is similar to Israeli couscous, only toasted. Because it has a tiny, firm shape, fregola holds up well for an hour or so after cooking—you can toss the pasta just before guests arrive and then let them help themselves at their leisure. If you can't find fregola (for sources, see p. 80), substitute any tiny pasta as long as you toast the pasta first. (For more information on fregola and on toasting pasta, see From Our Test Kitchen, p. 70).

A grilled radicchio salad is the other bookend for the main course. This peppery, somewhat bitter lettuce mellows when grilled, and, when tossed with baby spinach and shavings of Pecorino Romano, it's the perfect counterpoint to the rich grilled chicken and sausages.

These Tuscan dishes may not seem fancy, but that's exactly the point. This menu is all about simplicity, freshness, and bold flavors. It's casual and welcoming—and in my book, that's the way to entertain.



Rosemary oil

This wonderfully fragrant oil is the flavor base for many of the dishes in this menu. It involves little more than heating the oil so that the garlic and rosemary just begin to sizzle and infuse it.

Rosemary-Garlic Oil

Yields 1½ cups.

You can make this flavored oil up to five days ahead.

1½ cups extra-virgin olive oil
6 cloves garlic, smashed and peeled
3 sprigs fresh rosemary

Heat the olive oil and garlic in a small saucepan over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until the garlic starts to bubble steadily, 3 to 4 minutes. Add the rosemary, remove from the heat, and let cool to room temperature. Transfer to a clean glass jar or other storage container, cover, and refrigerate. Use within five days.

Bruschetta with Herbed Tomatoes

Serves six to eight.

For these bruschetta, the quality of the tomatoes makes all the difference. Use good ripe ones from your garden or pick some up at the local farmers' market.

2 large ripe tomatoes, cut in ¼-inch slices (you should have 12 slices)

4 tablespoons Rosemary-Garlic Oil (see the recipe at left)

1 teaspoon chopped fresh thyme

A scant ¼ teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes
Kosher salt

12 ¾-inch-thick slices from a crusty artisan-style loaf (from about ½ pound bread)

1 teaspoon good balsamic vinegar, preferably aged

Heat a gas grill to medium or prepare a medium-hot charcoal fire. (Or heat the broiler to high.)

Set the tomato slices on a small rack set over a rimmed baking sheet and sprinkle with 1 tablespoon of the oil, the thyme, red pepper flakes, and 1 teaspoon kosher salt. Let sit at room temperature for at least 10 minutes or up to a couple of hours.

Brush both sides of the bread with the remaining





3 tablespoons oil. Sprinkle lightly with salt. Grill (or broil) until crisp with prominent grill marks (or nicely browned), about 2 minutes. Flip and cook the other side in the same manner. Transfer to a platter and let cool to room temperature (they can sit for up to 2 hours, loosely covered).

Pour the tomato juices from the baking sheet into a small bowl. Before serving, brush these juices on the bread. Top with the tomatoes and a drop or two of balsamic vinegar and serve.

Tuscan Grilled Chicken, Sausage & Sage Skewers

Serves six to eight.

The crisp, intensely flavored sage leaves are delicious eaten with the chicken and sausage on these skewers.

2½ pounds boneless, skinless chicken thighs (about 7 or 8), trimmed of excess fat and cut in half (the pieces should be roughly equal in size; if the thighs are large, cut them in thirds or quarters)

½ cup plus 2 tablespoons Rosemary-Garlic Oil (see the recipe on the facing page)

1 teaspoon chopped fresh rosemary

Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

1½ pounds sweet Italian sausage links, cut into 2-inch pieces
24 large fresh sage leaves

Up to a day ahead and at least a couple of hours before serving, toss the chicken in a medium bowl with 2 tablespoons of the oil, the rosemary, 1 teaspoon kosher salt, and ½ teaspoon pepper.

If the grill isn't already fired up, heat a gas grill to medium or prepare a medium-hot charcoal fire. Divide the remaining ½ cup oil into two small bowls (one for grilling and one for serving). Alternately thread three pieces of sausage, three pieces of chicken, and four sage leaves onto six 12-inch metal skewers (or wooden skewers that have been soaked in water for ½ hour).

Grill the skewers, covered, until one side is browned and has good grill marks, about 4 minutes. Brush with some of the rosemary-garlic oil, flip, and cook the other side until it, too, has good grill marks, about 4 minutes. Brush with more oil and flip again. Continue cooking, flipping, and brushing with oil until the sausage and chicken are both cooked through (check by slicing into a couple of the thicker pieces), about another 10 minutes.

Let cool for a couple of minutes and then arrange on a platter, drizzle on the remaining oil, and set out for guests to serve themselves.

menu timeline

This menu is so easy, there isn't much prep work to worry about. You can get started a few days ahead, and then a couple of hours before your guests arrive, fire up the grill for the bruschetta, the vegetables for the pasta, and the radicchio for the salad—all are grilled over a medium fire, so you can cook them at the same time. As guests arrive, there will be little left to do but assemble the dishes and let people help themselves.

Up to 5 days ahead:
Make the rosemary-garlic oil.

Up to 1 day ahead:
Marinate the chicken.

A few hours ahead:
Grill the bread for the bruschetta; slice and season the tomatoes.
Grill and marinate the zucchini and peppers for the pasta.
Grill the radicchio and assemble the salad (without dressing).
Thread the chicken, sausage, and sage onto skewers.

Up to 1 hour before serving:
Assemble the bruschetta.
Grill the skewers.
Cook the pasta and toss with the grilled vegetables.
Dress and toss the radicchio salad.

As dinner is winding down:
Grill the figs for dessert.



Spinach & Grilled Radicchio Salad

Serves six to eight.

¾ to 1 pound radicchio (2 small or 1 large), trimmed and quartered through the core
7 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
6 ounces baby spinach (about 6 cups), rinsed well and spun dry
¾ to 4 ounces shaved Pecorino Romano or Parmigiano-Reggiano (about 1 cup)
2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar

Heat a gas grill to medium or prepare a medium-hot charcoal fire.

Brush the radicchio with 2 tablespoons of the oil and

sprinkle with ¾ teaspoon kosher salt. Grill the radicchio (covered if using a gas grill) until it browns and chars lightly in spots on one side, 3 to 4 minutes. Flip and grill until the other side is browned and the radicchio is softened and wilting, 3 to 4 minutes. (If using a large radicchio, you may need to grill it on a third side for a few more minutes to fully soften it.)

Let the radicchio cool on a cutting board for a couple of minutes, and then trim off the cores and coarsely chop. In a serving bowl, toss the radicchio with the spinach and the cheese.

Just before serving, toss the salad with the remaining 5 tablespoons oil and the vinegar and season with salt and pepper to taste.



Fregola with Grill-Marinated Red Peppers & Zucchini

Serves six to eight.

Fregola is a tiny toasted pasta from Sardinia (see *Where to Buy It*, p. 80). You can substitute any tiny pasta, but toast it first. For more information, see *From Our Test Kitchen*, p. 70.

2 red bell peppers, cored and cut into four pieces
1½ pounds zucchini (4 small), trimmed and quartered lengthwise
5 tablespoons Rosemary-Garlic Oil (see the recipe on p. 36)
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
1 tablespoon red-wine vinegar
3 tablespoons chopped fresh mint, plus 3 tablespoons torn leaves

2 teaspoons chopped fresh thyme
¾ pound fregola

Heat a gas grill to medium or prepare a medium-hot charcoal fire. In a large bowl, toss the peppers and zucchini with 2 tablespoons of the oil, 1 teaspoon kosher salt, and ½ teaspoon black pepper. Arrange the vegetables on the grill and cook, covered if using a gas grill, until they have nice grill marks, about 3 minutes for zucchini and 5 minutes for peppers. Flip and cook until the other sides are well browned, too, another 3 to 5 minutes. Continue cooking and flipping occasionally until the zucchini is crisp-tender and the peppers are completely tender with very charred skins, 8 to 10 minutes total for zucchini

and 12 to 15 minutes total for peppers. Transfer to a large cutting board to cool.

Scrape the charred skins off the peppers. Coarsely chop the vegetables and transfer to a large serving bowl. Toss with 2 tablespoons of the oil, the vinegar, chopped mint, and thyme. Season with salt and pepper to taste and let sit for up to 2 hours at room temperature.

Up to 1 hour before serving, bring a large pot of well-salted water to a boil. Add the pasta and cook, stirring occasionally, until just tender (about 10 minutes for fregola).

Drain the pasta and toss with the vegetables. Drizzle with the remaining 1 tablespoon oil and season to taste with salt and pepper. Sprinkle with the torn mint and set out on the table for serving.

Grill-marinating

is a technique I learned in Italy: vegetables—zucchini and peppers in this dish—are first grilled and then bathed in a vinaigrette, which gives them a pleasing tang.



What's for dessert?

Many fine Tuscan meals end simply with fresh fruit or a plate of ripe, local cheeses. The American appetite for sweets generally demands a little more, however. Since I'm not terribly skilled in the sweet side of the kitchen, I keep dessert simple. One of my favorite things to serve after a meal like this is ice cream with figs and honey.

I like to grill these figs just as dinner is winding down. They take only a couple of minutes to prepare and since they're cooked over a low flame, you can use the last dying embers of a charcoal fire (or just switch on the gas grill).

Grilled Fresh Figs with Ice Cream & Honey

Serves six to eight.

12 to 16 fresh Black Mission figs, stemmed and halved lengthwise
1 tablespoon canola oil
1 to 2 tablespoons aged balsamic vinegar
2 tablespoons granulated sugar
1½ teaspoons chopped fresh thyme
1½ to 2 pints vanilla ice cream
About ½ cup honey
5 large mint leaves, thinly sliced (optional)

Heat the gas grill to medium low or prepare a low charcoal fire. Set the figs cut side down on a baking sheet and brush the rounded side with the oil. Flip and brush the cut sides of the figs with the balsamic vinegar. In a small bowl, toss the sugar with the thyme, then sprinkle over the figs. Set the figs on the grill, cut side facing up. Cover the grill and cook until the sugary tops start to bubble and brown and the bottoms of the figs get light grill marks (without burning), 5 to 8 minutes.

Serve immediately over scoops of ice cream, drizzled with the honey and sprinkled with the mint if using.

Tony Rosenfeld is a contributing editor to Fine Cooking. ♦



wine choices

Pour a glass of Prosecco with the bruschetta with herbed tomatoes. This light, crisp bubbly hails from the Veneto region of Northeastern Italy and is a wonderful apéritif. The nonvintage Bisol "Jeio" (\$14) or the nonvintage Ruggeri (\$16) are two of the best I've recently tasted. The grilled chicken, sausage, and sage skewers need a robust red with plenty of youthful fruit, moderate tannins, and zesty acidity to complement the smoky flavors of the grill. A young Barbera will work well; the 2004 Michele Chiarlo Barbera d'Asti (\$14) and the 2004 Prunotto Barbera d'Asti Fiulot (\$16) are both good choices to serve with the main course and the grilled salads.

If you'd like to finish the meal with something sumptuous, not overly sweet, but delightful, the 2004 Bonny Doon Vineyard Muscat Vin de Glacier (375ml, \$18) is hard to beat for the money, and it would be delicious with the figs and vanilla ice cream.

—Contributing editor Tim Gaiser, a master sommelier

Great Steaks from the Skillet

The best steak you've ever tasted might not be from the grill

BY BRUCE AIDELLS

Come summer, the path to the grill gets well worn, especially when steak is on the menu. But there are times when I get such a hankering for the uniform and beautifully browned crust on a perfectly seared steak that I stay put in the kitchen and heat up a cast-iron pan. In fact, some of my favorite steak dinners include little more than a good cut of beef, some salt and pepper, and a hot sauté pan.

Start with the right steak

In order to get that good sear and keep the meat rare (the way I like it), I need steaks that are at least 1 inch thick, preferably 1½ inches. If you don't see such a steak packaged at the supermarket, ask the butcher behind the counter to custom cut one for you. My favorite cuts for sautéing include rib-eye, New York strip, and filet. (To find out more about these cuts, look to the sidebars on the following pages.)

Let the steak warm up a bit

A steak close to room temperature will cook more evenly than a cold one; when you slice into it, most of the interior will be cooked to the same reddish-pink color and tenderness. By contrast, if the meat is seared while very cold, you may end up with a grayish area between the browned crust and the



red center. Season the steaks with ample kosher salt and a little freshly ground black pepper as they sit; this lets some of the salt melt and blend with the meat, improving its flavor (but without making it taste salty).

Pick the perfect pan

A good, heavy-based pan is crucial for a well-seared steak. In my house, I have 25 skillets from which to choose, but my most heavily used pans by far are two cast-iron skillets I've had forever. I love cast-iron because you can really heat up the pan without ruining either the pan or the steak. Cast-iron cooks evenly and allows foods like steak to release easily but leave just enough browned bits on the surface of the skillet to flavor a sauce made in the pan.

My absolute favorite pan is a 9-inch cast-iron skillet left behind by a college roommate back in the days of wraparound windshields on two-tone Olds 88s; in other words, its age is indeterminate. It comfortably holds a thick rib-eye, porterhouse, or a couple of New York strip steaks (as would a 10-inch pan). When I'm cooking for a larger crowd, I reach for my 12-inch skillet (which I do remember buying about 30 years ago); it fits three New York steaks or a couple of rib-eyes, easily enough to feed six people. When choosing the size of the pan, think about accommodating the meat with just a little space between the steaks (if you're cooking more than one) and the edge of the pan. If too tightly packed, the meat will steam and you won't get good browning. Too much empty space, however, can cause any rendered fat to burn on the exposed surface of the pan.

If you don't already have cast iron in your pan collection, look to p. 28 for more information on them. Until you get one, you can use a heavy-based metal pan like the sandwiched metal pans from All-Clad, which heat evenly and give you those browned bits for sauce. Such pans need a little fat in

the pan before the steak goes in to keep the meat from sticking; either rub the pan with some of the beef fat trimmings or coat it very lightly with a little olive oil. Never, ever use a cheap, thin metal pan—unless you like your steak burned.

Sear, flip, and let rest

Before you crank up the heat, crank up the exhaust fan. Searing steak is a multi-sensory experience: You'll hear the sizzle, see the browning, and smell the caramelizing taking place. Without good ventilation, however, you may see and smell a little more smoke than you might like to.

Get the pan good and hot before the steak goes in. A hot pan is the key to keeping the meat from sticking to the cast iron. Don't move the steak at all for at least 3 minutes; as the steak sears and contracts, it will naturally release; be patient and most of the browned exterior will stay on the steak and not on the bottom of the pan. Once both sides are well browned, turn down the heat and cook on both sides until the steak is done to your liking.

Use an instant-read thermometer to check for doneness, but also press on the steak with your finger so you can get a feel for a perfectly cooked steak. Take the steak out of the pan when it reaches 120° to 125°F, which may seem low, but that's because I expect you to do the final but important last step to cooking a perfect steak: Let it rest off the heat before serving. A rest allows juices to be reabsorbed from the exterior of the steak back to the center; meanwhile the steak completes its cooking by allowing the heat from the hotter exterior to equilibrate with the cooler interior. The result is a perfectly cooked and juicy steak.

Finally, a beautifully marbled USDA prime grade steak needs nothing more than salt and pepper, but most steaks get just a little tastier with a little added something, which is why the recipes here include a spice rub, a pan sauce, and a flavored butter.

Is it Prime, Choice, or Select?

All meat processed in this country is done so under the inspection of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. If a meat packer chooses, the USDA will also grade the meat for quality. The top grades are Prime, Choice, and Select. Because it's expensive to do so, not all packers choose to have their meat graded. If a steak isn't labeled, chances are that if it were graded by the USDA, it would be stamped Select.

Unfortunately, Prime beef, which has the best marbling, texture, and flavor, rarely reaches the markets where you and I shop, instead going straight to restaurants or overseas. Your best quality guarantee? Buy steak labeled Choice, though bear in mind that within this designation there's great variation in quality. Taste and compare the offerings from different markets and stick with what you like.

—B. A.

Wine with beef

Robust reds are the traditional match with beef and for good reason:

The intense fruit flavors and drying tannins are perfectly matched to the richness of the meat, making every bite a moment of food-wine harmony. The richness of the Filet Steaks with Irish Whisky & Cream Pan Sauce calls for a full-bodied red with spice notes and plenty of acidity. A Petite Sirah would be perfect; try the 2004 Bogle California (\$14) and the 2003 David Bruce Central Coast (\$16). A ripe, juicy Australian Shiraz—such as the 2003 Peter Lehmann Barossa Shiraz (\$16) or the 2003 d'Arenberg Laughing Magpie Shiraz-Viognier,



McLaren Vale (\$18)—would be delicious with the New York Strip Steak. Finally, the herbal notes of the Star Anise & Rosemary Rib-Eye call for a straight-ahead Cabernet Sauvignon like the 2003 Hess Select Cabernet Sauvignon California (\$15) or the 2001 Beringer Knights Valley Cabernet Sauvignon (\$24).

—Tim Gaiser,
contributing editor
and master sommelier



Filet Steaks with an Irish Whisky & Cream Pan Sauce

Serves four.

This is a take on Steak Diane, the famous tableside dish served for eons in fancy French and "Continental" restaurants. Instead of the traditional pounded steaks for Steak Diane, I prefer using 1-inch-thick butter-tender beef filet; its somewhat subtle flavor can use the boost of a zesty sauce.

- 4 1- to 1¼-inch-thick pieces beef tenderloin (about 7½ ounces each)**
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper**
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil (if not using a cast-iron pan)**
- 1 tablespoon unsalted butter**
- 3 tablespoons finely chopped shallots (from 1 large shallot)**
- ¼ cup Irish whisky, such as Jameson, or brandy**
- ½ cup homemade or low-salt canned beef or chicken broth**
- ½ teaspoon Worcestershire sauce**
- 2 teaspoons Dijon mustard**
- ½ cup heavy cream**
- ½ to 1 teaspoon fresh lemon juice**

Season each steak generously with salt and pepper. Heat a heavy-based (preferably cast-iron) skillet that's large enough to hold the steaks over high heat until quite hot. (Add the

1 tablespoon vegetable oil if not using cast iron.) Test by touching the edge of one steak to the pan surface; it will sizzle briskly when ready. Immediately drop in the steaks and sear one side for 2 minutes. Sneak a peek to see if the first side is nicely browned. If not, continue to sear that side for another minute or so. Flip the steaks and sear the other side for 2 to 3 minutes. Reduce the heat to medium high, cook for another 2 minutes, flip, and cook until a digital instant-read thermometer in the center of the meat reads 120°F for rare or 125°F for medium rare, another 1 to 2 minutes. Transfer the steaks to the warm platter and let them rest, covered loosely with foil, while you make the sauce.

To make the pan sauce, return the unwashed pan to medium heat. Add the butter and let it melt. Add the shallots and cook, stirring, until fragrant and just tender, 1 to 2 minutes. Add the whisky or brandy and stir with a wooden spoon, scraping up any browned bits stuck to the pan. Add the broth and Worcestershire sauce, raise the heat to medium high, and bring to a boil. Whisk in the mustard and then the cream. Continue to cook at a boil, stirring, until reduced to a saucy consistency, 3 to 5 minutes. Taste the sauce and season with salt, pepper, and lemon juice. Serve the steaks with the sauce.



Filet

a.k.a. filet mignon

This exceedingly tender steak is cut from the tenderloin. Ask for center-cut filets, rather than ones from the tail or head; 6 to 8 ounces per person is a good serving. Filet has a bit less flavor than other cuts, but it's perfectly suited for the sauté pan, especially because its tender texture is an excellent match for a rich pan sauce. Serve this cut rare or medium rare; when cooked past that, its flavor can become livery.



New York strip

a.k.a. top loin, New York steak, shell steak, strip steak, sirloin strip, Kansas City steak

The official name for this steak is top loin, and it comes from the middle back, called the short loin, which is located on the exterior surface of the spinal column. Confusingly, it goes by at least 20 names that I know of. (In California, we call it New York steak. In New York, it's often called shell steak or strip steak or sirloin strip—despite its not coming from the sirloin.) Whatever it's called, this steak is tender and well flavored and you will pay accordingly. It takes especially well to dry rubs and compound butters. For evenly seared steaks, buy one or two large, thick steaks (rather than several thin ones), and cut them into servings after cooking, especially if you like meat rare or medium rare. Since they're quite tender, I rarely use acidic wet marinades with these steaks.



New York Strip Steak with Sweet Pepper-Chorizo Butter

Serves four.

This recipe makes more flavored butter than you'll need; freeze the rest for another steak. Chorizo is a spicy, cured sausage often used in Spanish cooking. Be sure to buy the ready-to-eat kind found in many supermarket delis, as you won't be cooking the sausage any further (for more information, see *From Our Test Kitchen*, p. 70). For an even bolder flavor, replace the paprika with pimentón (smoked Spanish paprika) and the red peppers with jarred Spanish piquillo peppers (for sources, see p. 80).

FOR THE SWEET PEPPER-CHORIZO BUTTER:

2 cloves garlic
¼ cup diced, ready-to-eat chorizo
¼ cup jarred roasted red peppers
1 tablespoon chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
4 ounces (½ cup) unsalted butter, softened
2 teaspoons sweet Hungarian paprika
¼ teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

FOR THE STEAK:

2 1¼- to 1½-inch-thick New York strip steaks
(¾ to 1 pound each)
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
1 tablespoon canola or vegetable oil (if not using a cast-iron pan)

Make the flavored butter: Chop the garlic in a food processor. Scrape down the bowl and add the chorizo, roasted peppers, and parsley. Pulse a few times to finely chop. Add

the butter, paprika, Worcestershire sauce, ¼ teaspoon kosher salt, and ½ teaspoon pepper; pulse to blend. Scrape the flavored butter onto a large sheet of plastic wrap. Using the plastic, shape the butter into a rough block or log, wrap well, and refrigerate until firm. (You can refrigerate the butter for up to a week or freeze it for up to two months.)

Cook the steaks: Take the steaks out of the refrigerator, season both sides with salt and pepper, and let sit at room temperature for at least 15 or up to 30 minutes. Turn on your exhaust fan. Have ready a warm platter.

Heat a heavy-based (preferably cast-iron) skillet that's large enough to hold the steaks over high heat until quite hot (add the 1 tablespoon oil if not using cast iron). Test by touching the edge of one steak to the pan surface; it will sizzle briskly when ready. Immediately drop in the steaks and sear one side for 3 minutes. Sneak a peek to see if each steak is nicely browned. If not, continue to sear that side for another minute or so. Flip the steak and sear the other side for 2 to 3 minutes. Reduce the heat to medium high, cook another 3 minutes, flip, and cook until an instant-read thermometer at the center of the meat reads 120°F for rare, 125°F for medium rare, and 130°F for medium, another 1 to 3 minutes. Transfer the steaks to the warm platter, cover loosely with foil, and let rest for 5 minutes.

Cut each steak in half and portion onto warm plates. Top each steak with some of the flavored butter (it may crumble a bit when you slice it; that's fine), and serve immediately.



Rib-eye

**a.k.a. Delmonico,
beauty steak, market
steak, Spencer steak**

A rib-eye is my all-time favorite steak for pan-searing. It's cut from the prime rib area of the upper back and is the most flavorful and fattiest of the common steaks. Rib-eye comes boneless or bone-in; both are great, though I think bone-in offers more flavor. Butchers often cut this steak too thin so that a single steak will weigh a pound or less. But it's better to buy it thick, preferably at least 1½ inches, because it cooks better. The deep, beefy flavor of rib-eye holds up well to most dry rubs or wet marinades and is especially well suited to strong flavors like soy, garlic, ginger, and chiles.

Star Anise & Rosemary Rib-Eye Steak

Serves four to six.

This recipe combines the decidedly Eastern flavor of star anise with a very Western herb: fresh rosemary. Unusual, yes, but this inspired pairing from my wife, chef Nancy Oakes, works deliciously well with rib-eye's robust flavor. If you have leftovers, try them in the Vietnamese soup on p. 74.

1 tablespoon chopped fresh rosemary
1 teaspoon ground star anise or ½ teaspoon
Chinese five-spice powder
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
2 teaspoons olive oil; more as needed
1 1½- to 2-inch-thick boneless rib-eye steak
(1½ to 2 pounds)

In a small bowl, combine the rosemary and star anise with 2 teaspoons kosher salt and 1 teaspoon pepper. Coat the steak on both sides with the oil and rub the seasoning mix all over both sides, too. Set aside for half an hour at room temperature or, for even more flavor, wrap the steak in plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 2 hours and up to 24 hours. (If refrigerating the steak, let it sit at

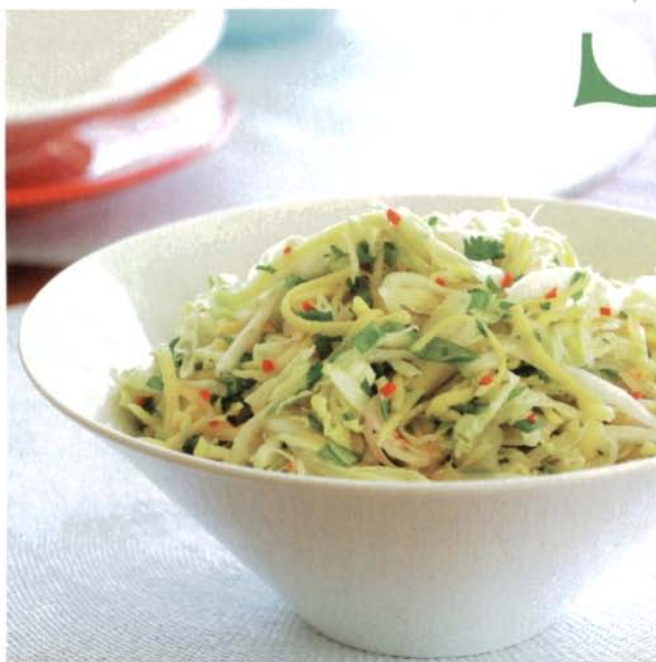
room temperature for at least 15 minutes before cooking it.)

Turn on your exhaust fan. Have ready a warm platter. Heat a heavy-based (preferably cast-iron) skillet that's large enough to hold the steak over high heat until quite hot. (If not using cast iron, add 1 tablespoon oil to the pan and heat over medium-high heat.) Test by touching the steak to the pan surface; it will sizzle briskly when ready. Immediately drop in the steak and sear one side for 3 minutes. Sneak a peek to see if the steak is nicely browned. If not, continue to sear that side for another minute or so. Flip the steak and sear the other side for 3 minutes. Reduce the heat to medium high if using cast-iron (medium if using another heavy pan), and cook for another 4 to 6 minutes. Flip and cook until a digital instant-read thermometer in the center of the meat reads 120°F for rare, 125°F for medium rare, and 130°F for medium, another 4 to 8 minutes, depending on thickness. Transfer the steak to the warm platter and let rest, covered loosely with foil, for 5 to 7 minutes. To serve, slice the steak into ½-inch-thick strips or cut the meat into four smaller pieces. Serve immediately.

Bruce Aidells is the author of The Complete Meat Cookbook. ♦



A Fresh Take on Slaws



A few tricks
will give slaw
a crisp texture
and fresh,
balanced flavor



BY ALLISON EHRI

Prep it ahead:

You can slice the vegetables for all of these slaws in advance. Cabbage, carrots, and celery root can be sliced up to a day ahead, while onions, mango, and jicama can be sliced up to a few hours ahead. The dressings can also be made up to a day in advance. Refrigerate the ingredients in separate sealed containers. Assemble the slaw as close to serving time as possible.

Mexican-Style Slaw with Jicama, Cilantro & Lime

Yields 5 to 6 cups; serves six to eight.

This slaw also makes a tasty topping for fish or chicken soft tacos.

1 small or ½ medium red or green cabbage (or use a mix of both, about 1½ pounds), bruised outer leaves removed, cored, and cut into six wedges

Kosher salt

1 medium jicama (about 1 pound), peeled and quartered

4 scallions (white and green parts), thinly sliced on the diagonal (about ½ cup)

¼ cup chopped fresh cilantro

¼ cup plus 2 tablespoons mayonnaise

¼ cup fresh lime juice; more to taste

1 jalapeño, seeded (if you like) and minced

Thinly slice the cabbage in a food processor using the 4mm slicing disk (see the box on p. 49) or

by hand; you should have about 6 packed cups. Put the cabbage in a colander and toss it with 1 tablespoon kosher salt. Lay a plate that fits inside the colander on top of the cabbage and set a heavy can or jar on top of the plate. Drain the cabbage in the sink or over a bowl for 2 hours.

If using a food processor, switch to the grating disk and grate the jicama (position it as shown in the box on p. 49) or cut it into very thin (julienne) strips by hand; you should have about 2 cups. Put the jicama in a large bowl and toss in the scallions and cilantro.

In a small bowl, whisk the mayonnaise, lime juice, and jalapeño.

Turn the cabbage out onto a clean dishtowel or paper towels and pat it thoroughly dry. Toss the cabbage with the jicama and the lime mayonnaise. Season to taste with more kosher salt and lime juice if needed.

I'm a sucker for slaw—I think it's the juicy crunch that really gets me. Unfortunately, if slaw isn't made correctly, you get what we've all had at one picnic or another—slaw that's heavy, soggy, and overly sweet.

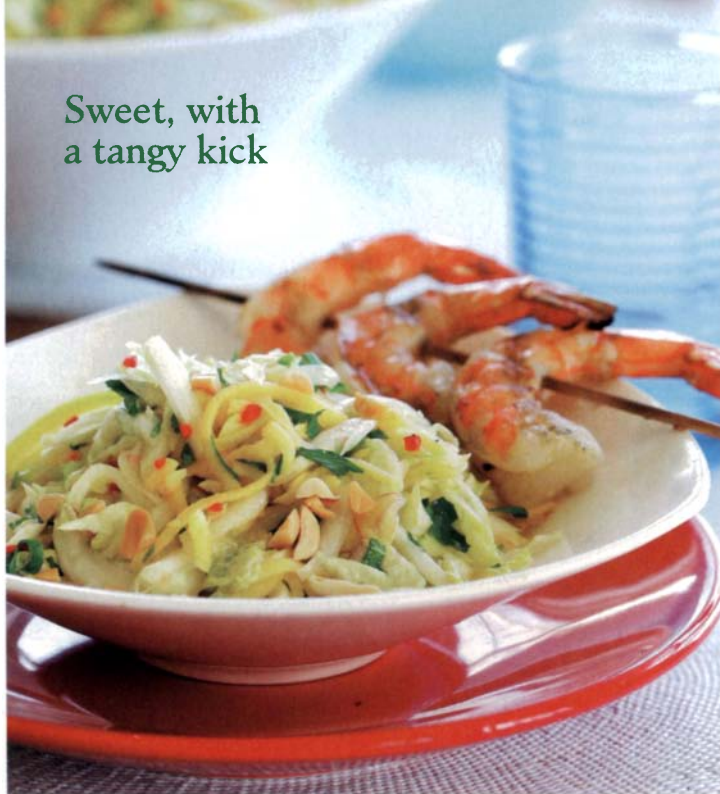
I've found that the secret to a great slaw is to make it feel lighter and more like a fresh salad, which is easy to do by just learning a few simple tricks.

Balance flavors and textures. To provide crunch, I like to add vegetables like carrots, celery root, and jicama to the cabbage, and then toss them together with a fresh, bright dressing. While some dressings for slaw can be overlysweet and heavy, I make mine with fresh citrus juice, which gives the slaw a much lighter feel.

Toss with salt, then weight dense vegetables to purge them of excess water. This step makes the vegetables tender and briny and ensures that the slaw doesn't become too wet once dressed. Coarser cabbages like green and red cabbage benefit from longer purging, whereas a more tender cabbage like Napa breaks down extremely fast, so a short salting is all it requires. Onions also benefit from salting, which mellows any harsh flavors and brings out their sweeter side.

Once it's assembled, serve the slaw as soon as possible. Even when purged, the vegetables will continue to release water after they're mixed with a dressing, so they're best served within an hour or two of assembly. The exception is slaw containing Napa cabbage, which should be served immediately. You can refrigerate leftover slaw for up to two days; it will taste as delicious as ever but will lose some of its crisp texture and will exude more liquid.

Sweet, with
a tangy kick



Asian-Style Slaw with Green Mango

Yields 4 to 5 cups; serves four to six.

The tangy flavor of the green mango in this slaw goes really well with fish or shrimp.

- 1 small Napa cabbage (about 2 pounds), quartered lengthwise, cored, and halved crosswise**
- 2 small shallots, very thinly sliced (about 2 tablespoons)**
- Kosher salt**
- 1 unripe mango (about 1 pound, as green as possible), peeled and pitted**
- 2 tablespoons lime juice; more to taste**
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil**
- 1 tablespoon fish sauce**
- 1 medium clove garlic, minced (about 1 teaspoon)**

- 1 small red hot chile, seeded (if you like) and minced (about 1½ teaspoons)**
- 1 teaspoon granulated sugar**
- ½ cup chopped fresh basil, cilantro, or mint (or a mix)**
- ⅓ cup coarsely chopped salted peanuts (don't use dry roasted)**

Thinly slice the cabbage in a food processor using the 4mm slicing disk (see the box at right) or by hand; you should have about 8 packed cups. In a colander, toss the cabbage with the shallot and 1 tablespoon kosher salt. Lay a plate that fits inside the colander on top of the cabbage and set a heavy can or jar on top of the plate. Drain the

Buttermilk & Herb Cole Slaw

Yields 5 to 6 cups; serves six to eight.

This version of cole slaw is versatile—it can be served as a salad, a side, or a condiment. It's especially good with steak.

- 1 small Savoy cabbage (about 1¼ pounds), bruised outer leaves removed, cored, and cut into eight wedges**
- 1 large carrot (about 6 ounces), peeled and cut into 3-inch lengths**
- 1 small celery root (about 10 ounces), peeled and quartered**
- 1 small sweet onion (about 6 ounces), very thinly sliced (about 1 cup)**
- Kosher salt**
- 1 small clove garlic**
- ⅓ cup buttermilk**
- ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil**
- 1½ tablespoons fresh lemon juice; more to taste**
- 2 tablespoons thinly sliced chives**
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley**
- ¼ teaspoon celery seeds**
- Freshly ground black pepper**

Thinly slice the cabbage in a food processor using the 4mm slicing disk (see the box at right) or by

hand; you should have about 6 packed cups. Put the cabbage in a large bowl. If using a food processor, switch to the grating disk and grate the carrot and celery root or cut it into very thin (julienne) strips by hand; you should have about 2½ cups total. Add the carrot and celery root to the cabbage, along with the onion and 1 tablespoon kosher salt and toss. Pack the slaw into a colander. Lay a plate that fits inside the colander on top of the slaw and set a heavy can or jar on top of the plate. Drain the slaw in the sink or over a bowl for 2 hours.

Coarsely chop the garlic. Sprinkle the garlic with a large pinch of kosher salt and mash it into a paste on a cutting board with the side of a chef's knife. In a small bowl, mix the mashed garlic, buttermilk, olive oil, lemon juice, chives, parsley, celery seeds, and ⅛ teaspoon pepper.

Turn the slaw out onto a clean dishtowel or some paper towels and pat it thoroughly dry. Transfer the slaw to a large bowl, toss with the buttermilk dressing, and season to taste with kosher salt, pepper, and lemon juice if needed.

A brighter
version of
a classic



cabbage in the sink or over a bowl for 30 minutes.

If using a food processor, switch to the grating disk and grate the mango (see the bottom right photo in the box at right) or cut it into very thin (julienne) strips by hand; you should have 1½ to 2 cups. Put the mango in a large bowl.

In a small bowl, mix the lime juice, oil, fish sauce, garlic, chile, and sugar.

Turn the cabbage out onto a clean dishtowel or some paper towels and pat it thoroughly dry. Toss the cabbage with the mango, herbs, and dressing. Season to taste with more kosher salt and lime juice if needed. Sprinkle with the peanuts and serve immediately.

how to

For quicker slaws use a food processor

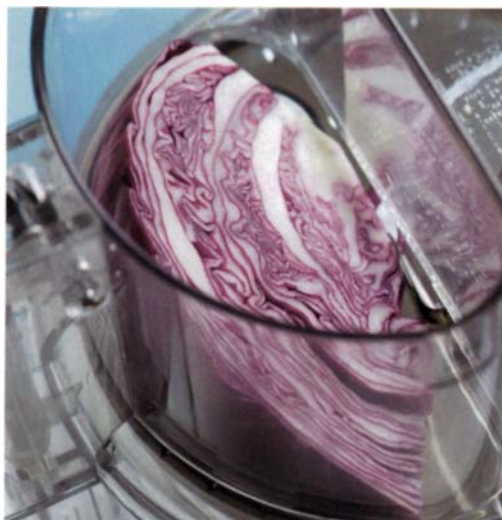
You can slice the ingredients for these slaws by hand, but a food processor does the job in seconds. To get the long, thin strands that make a great slaw, you need to use the appropriate blade attachment and then orient the vegetables in a certain way. Here's how to do it.



Pick the right disk

You'll need to use your food processor's 4mm slicing disk, shown on top above, and the medium grating disk (it may be called a 4mm or medium shredding disk). Most food processors come with these attachments, but if yours doesn't, see *Where to Buy It*, p. 80.

And position the vegetable correctly



For cabbage, use the slicing disk. Put the wedge of cabbage in the feed tube with a cut side on the disk so you get nice long ribbons.



For carrots, celery root, jicama, and mangos, use the grating disk. Cut them into lengths the same size as the feed tube opening, and then stack the pieces in the tube with a long side on the disk to get long shreds.



Allison Ehri is Fine Cooking's test kitchen associate and food stylist. ♦

Roasted



Roasted Potato Salad with Bell Peppers, Roasted Corn & Tomatoes

Serves six.

1 ear fresh corn, in the husk
¼ cup plus 1 teaspoon extra-virgin olive oil
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
2 cups red, yellow, or orange cherry tomatoes (or a combination), halved
½ red bell pepper, cut into ¼-inch dice
½ green bell pepper, cut into ¼-inch dice
½ yellow bell pepper, cut into ¼-inch dice
½ small red onion, cut into ¼-inch dice
½ cup chopped fresh basil
2 small cloves garlic, finely chopped
1 recipe Simple Roasted Potatoes (see the recipe at right)
3 tablespoons red-wine vinegar

Position a rack in the center of the oven and heat the oven to 450°F. Remove the husk and put the corn on a small baking sheet. Drizzle 1 teaspoon of the oil onto the corn and rub it over all the kernels. Sprinkle with kosher salt and pepper. Roast, turning the cob occasionally, until the corn kernels are light brown in a few spots, about 20 minutes. Let the corn cool. Cut the kernels from the cob.

Add the corn, tomatoes, red, green, and yellow peppers, onion, basil, and garlic to the potatoes. Toss gently. Whisk the remaining ¼ cup oil and the vinegar together and add to the salad. Toss again. Season with kosher salt and pepper to taste and serve immediately.

Tip: Roast the corn while you roast the potatoes.

Potato Salads

For great flavor, roast first and then toss with fresh summer vegetables

BY JOANNE WEIR

Every so often we all need to shake things up a little, right? A vacation to break our work routine, a sweeping spring cleaning to get rid of all that accumulated junk, or just a nice evening at a fancy restaurant without the kids. I like to think that the same is true in the kitchen—whether that means trying a new dish or giving a new spin to a tired old one. It's this kind of spirit that inspired these potato salads, which have an unexpected twist. Because I roast the potatoes instead of boiling them, they have a crunchy-on-the-outside, soft-on-the-inside texture that boiled potatoes can only dream of. I mix them with vibrant summer vegetables in a big bowl and toss everything with an olive-oil-based dressing (no mayo here). The result: colorful salads bursting with pure, bright summer flavor.

These roasted potatoes couldn't be easier. I spread potato chunks on a heavy-duty rimmed baking sheet, drizzle on some olive oil, sprinkle with salt and pepper, and roll them around the pan until they're well coated. Even without any stirring during cooking, they brown on the side that touches the pan and get a nice exterior crunch,

while remaining soft and tender at heart. As the potatoes roast, I prepare the other ingredients and the dressing. I like to toss the salad while the potatoes are still a bit warm, because they absorb the dressing better.

Red-skinned or Yukon Gold potatoes are my favorites for salad. When roasted, they maintain a creamy texture beneath a slightly browned, crisp surface. I prefer small potatoes (called new potatoes) of 1 to 1½ inches in diameter, as I think they have the best texture and flavor. If they're not available, I use larger Yukon Golds and cut them into smaller chunks.

To finish the salads use the freshest possible ingredients and treat them simply. That's my philosophy with just about anything in the kitchen. A big part of what makes these salads so irresistibly tasty is that the potatoes are paired with vegetables at the peak of their season, adding color and crunch (most are raw or only lightly cooked), as well as tons of flavor. I avoid heavy dressings because I like to let the ingredients shine. Olive oil with just a squeeze of lemon or a dash of vinegar will do the trick most of the time. Salsa-verde-style herb sauces are also a great way to dress roasted potato salads.

Simple Roasted Potatoes

Serves six.

2 pounds small red-skinned potatoes or small Yukon Gold potatoes, washed and cut into ¾-inch chunks

**3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper**

Position a rack in the center of the oven and heat the oven to 450°F. Spread the potatoes on a heavy-duty rimmed baking sheet. Drizzle with the olive oil, sprinkle with 1 teaspoon kosher salt and several grinds of pepper, and roll them around to evenly coat them with the oil. Spread the potatoes in a single layer, preferably with a cut side down. Roast them until they're tender when pierced with a fork, 20 to 30 minutes, depending on the potatoes. The potatoes should be browned on the sides touching the pan.

Loosen the potatoes from the pan with a thin spatula and transfer them to a large serving bowl to be tossed with the salad ingredients and dressing. They can be tossed while still warm or at room temperature.





Roasted Potato Salad with Shaved Fennel & Salsa Verde

Serves six.

1/2 cup chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
3 tablespoons thinly sliced chives
3 tablespoons drained, rinsed, and chopped capers
2 tablespoons fresh orange juice
1 tablespoon white-wine vinegar or Champagne vinegar
1 teaspoon finely grated orange zest
1 teaspoon chopped fresh thyme
1 medium shallot, finely chopped
1 medium clove garlic, finely chopped
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
1 medium-small fennel bulb
1 recipe Simple Roasted Potatoes (see the recipe on p. 51)

In a medium bowl, stir the parsley, olive oil, chives, capers, orange juice, vinegar, orange zest, thyme, shallot, and garlic to make the salsa verde. Season with kosher salt and pepper to taste.

Cut off the top and the bottom of the fennel. Cut the fennel bulb in half from top to bottom. Lay each half flat on its cut surface and then slice each half crosswise as thinly as possible. Stop slicing when you hit the core (a little core is all right, but you don't want wide areas of core in your slices). Discard the remainder or save for another use.

Add the salsa verde and shaved fennel to the bowl of roasted potatoes. Toss well, season with kosher salt and pepper to taste, and serve.

Serving suggestion: Try this salad with grilled or sear-roasted salmon, chicken breasts, or rib-eye.

Roasted Potato Salad with Crispy Prosciutto & Mustard Vinaigrette

Serves six.

4 thin slices prosciutto (about 2 ounces)
4 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
2 medium shallots, finely chopped
1/2 cup finely diced (1/4 inch) cornichons or gherkins
3 tablespoons grainy or whole-grain Dijon mustard
2 tablespoons white-wine vinegar
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
1 recipe Simple Roasted Potatoes (see the recipe on p. 51)
3 tablespoons coarsely chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley

Heat the oven to 400°F. Cut the prosciutto crosswise into 1/2-inch strips. Arrange the strips in a single layer on a baking sheet and bake, watching



closely, until crisp and light golden, 6 to 8 minutes. With a spatula, loosen the prosciutto from the pan and set aside.

Heat 1 tablespoon of the olive oil in a small skillet over medium heat. Add the shallots and cook, stirring frequently until soft, 2 to 3 minutes. Add the remaining 3 tablespoons olive oil, the cornichons, mustard, and vinegar. Season with kosher salt and pepper to taste and mix well.

Add the warm shallot-mustard vinaigrette to the potatoes along with the reserved prosciutto and parsley. Toss, taste for seasoning, and add more kosher salt and pepper if necessary. Serve immediately.

Serving suggestion: This salad is good with grilled pork chops or roasted pork tenderloin.



Roasted Potato Salad with Green Beans, Feta & Mint

Serves six.

**¾ pound green beans, ends trimmed,
cut diagonally into 1½-inch pieces**

⅓ cup chopped fresh mint

**1 recipe Simple Roasted Potatoes
(see the recipe on p. 51)**

5 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

1½ tablespoons fresh lemon juice

**Kosher salt and freshly ground
black pepper**

¼ pound crumbled feta (1 scant cup)

Mint sprigs, for garnish (optional)

Lemon wedges, for garnish (optional)

Bring a pot of salted water to a boil over high heat. Add the green beans and cook until crisp-tender, 4 to 7 minutes. Drain.

Add the green beans and chopped mint to the potatoes and toss. In a small bowl, whisk the olive oil and lemon juice. Add to the salad and toss. Season with kosher salt and pepper to taste. Crumble the feta on top and serve garnished with mint sprigs and lemon wedges, if using.

Serving suggestion: This salad pairs well with grilled tuna or broiled lamb chops.

Joanne Weir is a culinary teacher, cookbook author, and the star of the PBS cooking show Joanne Weir's Cooking Class. ♦

The New Ratatouille

Sauté or roast—but don't simmer—to make this classic Provençal vegetable dish truly delicious

BY MARTHA HOLMBERG

The end of summer is such an amazing time to cook and eat. So many vegetables are in season, especially the sexy, colorful Mediterranean ones—eggplant, peppers, tomatoes, zucchini. Yes, I think even zucchini can be sexy, when it's picked while still slim, taut, and shiny dark green.

These vegetables have a keen affinity for one another, so I'm always looking for ways to team them together in dishes. Classic French ratatouille (pronounced ra-ta-TWEE) is a natural. Trouble is, I usually hate ratatouille.

While there's nothing wrong with the concept of ratatouille—a medley of these vegetables accented with garlic and onion, fresh herbs, and some fruity olive oil—the execution of the dish is often a big fat disappointment for me. Most ratatouille just feels like a vegetable porridge. Looking through a half-dozen cookbooks, I saw instructions to “simmer,” “stew,” or even “boil”—the idea being to marry the flavors of the vegetables. But for me, too much togetherness just makes the dish bland. The vegetables lose their own personalities, and the texture gets so mushy.

Sauté each vegetable solo. For years, I never really bothered to make ratatouille until I learned an untraditional method from a colleague at cooking school. Instead of a wet-cooking method, I sauté each vegetable separately. This dry-heat/high-heat method cooks off a lot of water from the vegetables, concentrating their flavors. And they also

brown and caramelize, which deepens and rounds out the flavor of the dish. Another benefit is that I can season each vegetable properly and cook it to just the right texture.

Reduce the juices for extra flavor. After each vegetable is done, I toss it in a colander set over a bowl. As the vegetables sit, lots of savory juices accumulate in the bowl. I simmer those juices until they're reduced to an incredibly flavorful glaze (and it takes all my willpower not to drink the glaze right then and there), which I fold into the vegetables, along with fresh herbs, a spritz of lemon, and a dash of hot sauce. These last additions lift the whole dish and cut the sweetness of the vegetables.

I do use a lot of olive oil as I sauté, which I think adds flavor and creates a super-lush texture. The finished ratatouille is intensely flavored and works equally well as a side dish and as a condiment to use in other dishes. I like to make a pretty big batch, even just for my small family, because I can transform it into so many other dishes during the week after I make it.

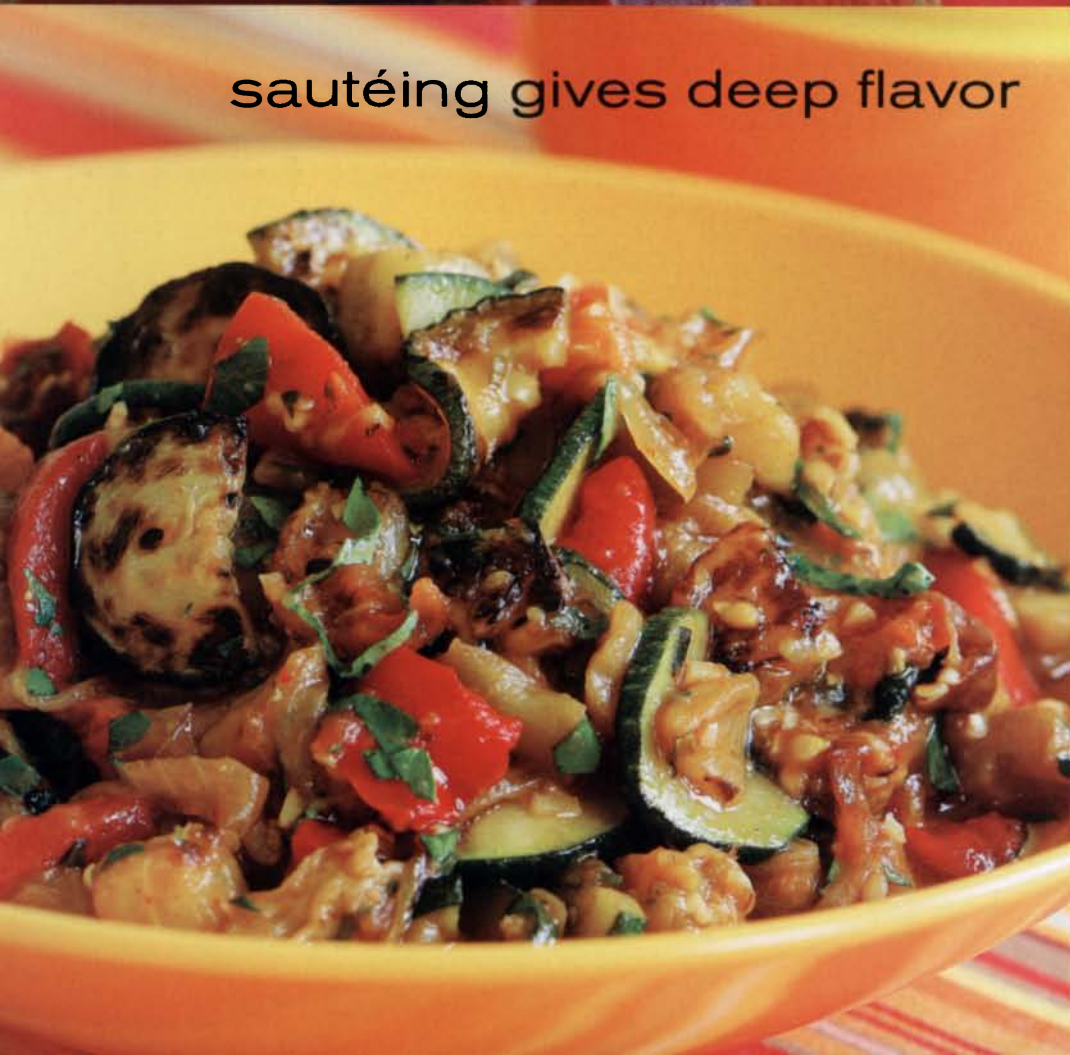
Roasting is a good option, too. I'm also offering a second untraditional method for making ratatouille that doesn't create flavors quite as rich as the sautéed version, but that's still pretty darn good (my husband actually prefers it). The method—oven roasting—is different, but the principle is the same: Cook the vegetables with high heat to evaporate water and concentrate flavors. This method is much more hands-off, so you're free to take care of the rest of dinner. It yields a bit less, though, so you might not have the delicious leftovers.

Make it ahead, or use it left over

Ratatouille is so versatile that you'll want to have leftovers to use throughout the week. The sautéed version (see p. 56), yields more than the roasted one and holds up best (two payoffs for putting the extra time into making it), so plan to make that one if you're expecting leftovers. You can keep it in the refrigerator for a week, which is a boon for making delicious quick meals, like the simple puff pastry tart and the savory gratin on p. 57 (or any one of the ideas I've suggested on that page). You can also freeze leftovers for a month or so; the texture won't be quite the same, but you could add a little to a soup or a braise, or tuck some into a sandwich.



roasting is hands off



sautéing gives deep flavor

Roasted Ratatouille

Yields 4 to 5 cups; serves four.

Here's a mostly hands-off version of ratatouille that's different in character from the sautéed one on the following page but also delicious. It yields a bit less, but by using two sheet pans, you'll have an ample side dish for four.

- 2 small onions (about 5 ounces each),**
cut into ¼-inch-thick half-moons
- 2 red bell peppers (6 to 7 ounces each),**
peeled (as much as possible with
a vegetable peeler; serrated works
best), cored, and cut into ¼-inch-
wide strips
- 1 medium eggplant (about 1 pound),**
peeled if desired and sliced crosswise
½-inch thick, slices then cut in halves
or quarters, depending on size
- 2 medium zucchini (7 to 8 ounces each),**
trimmed and cut into ¼-inch-thick
rounds
- 15 whole cloves garlic, peeled**
½ cup plus 2 tablespoons extra-virgin
olive oil; more as needed
- 1 teaspoon chopped fresh rosemary**
Kosher salt
- 4 medium ripe tomatoes (about**
1½ pounds total), peeled (with a
serrated vegetable peeler; otherwise,
skip the peeling), cored, and cut into
½-inch chunks
- ¼ cup thinly sliced fresh basil**
(a chiffonade)

Position racks in the top and bottom thirds of the oven and heat the oven to 400°F. Line two large rimmed baking sheets (12x16-inch sheet pans are a good size) with foil and top with a sheet of parchment. In a large bowl, toss the onions, peppers, eggplant, zucchini, garlic, olive oil, rosemary, and 1½ teaspoons kosher salt. Spread the vegetables evenly over both sheets. Don't spread the vegetables too thin or they may burn (they shrink a lot as they cook).

Roast, stirring the vegetables a few times and swapping the positions of the pans once, until the vegetables are slightly collapsed or shriveled, starting to brown, and very tender, about 45 minutes. If the vegetables look like they may burn, turn down the heat or pile them closer together. If they look dry, drizzle on a little olive oil. Divide the tomatoes between the two pans and continue to roast until the tomatoes soften and shrink and the other vegetables are well-browned, another 30 to 50 minutes. Scrape all the vegetables and any juices into a serving bowl. Toss with the basil, taste for seasoning, and serve warm.



Martha Holmberg says, "I've written the directions for one vegetable at a time, but you can fire up two skillets and cut the cooking time in half. You can also cut up the next vegetable while the last one is cooking."

Sautéed Ratatouille

Yields 5 to 6 cups; serves six to eight.

This ratatouille is delicious when made a day or two ahead. Just store it in the refrigerator and bring it to room temperature or gently heat it in a baking dish in a low oven before serving.

- 1 pound eggplant (1 medium globe), peeled and cut into ½-inch chunks (about 3½ cups)**
- Kosher salt**
- 9 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil**
- 8 ounces onion (1 medium), thinly sliced (about 2 cups)**
- 2 teaspoons chopped fresh thyme**
- 1 pound red bell peppers (2 medium), peeled (as much as possible with a vegetable peeler; serrated works best), cored, and cut into ¾-inch pieces (about 2 cups)**
- 2 teaspoons chopped fresh rosemary**
- 1 pound zucchini (3 or 4 small), halved lengthwise and cut into ⅛-inch-thick half-moons (about 3 cups)**
- ¼ cup chopped garlic (6 to 8 large cloves)**
- 1 pound tomatoes (2 medium), peeled (with a serrated vegetable peeler; otherwise, skip the peeling), cored, and cut into 1-inch chunks (about 3 cups)**
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice**

This recipe takes a bit of time, but the deep, rich flavors are worth the effort, and it yields enough for delicious leftovers.

- 1 teaspoon finely grated lemon zest**
- Few drops hot sauce**
- 2 tablespoons thinly sliced fresh basil (a chiffonade)**
- 2 tablespoons roughly chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley**
- 1 tablespoon thinly sliced fresh mint (a chiffonade) (optional)**

Toss the eggplant with 1 teaspoon kosher salt in a colander and let sit in the sink or over a bowl while you prepare the other vegetables.

Sauté the vegetables one at a time.

In a large (12-inch) skillet, heat 1 tablespoon of the oil over medium heat. Add the onion, the thyme, and ¼ teaspoon kosher salt. Cook, stirring occasionally, until very soft and deep golden brown, 15 to 20 minutes. Scrape into a clean colander or large strainer that's set over a bowl to catch the juices.

In the same skillet, heat another 3 tablespoons oil over medium-high heat. Add the bell peppers and ¼ teaspoon kosher salt. Cook, stirring occasionally, until they start to soften and get browned around the edges, about 5 minutes. Add the rosemary, lower the heat to medium, and cook, stirring occasionally, until they're extremely soft and sweet, another 10 to 15 minutes. Gently fold into the onions in the colander.

Heat another 1 tablespoon oil over high heat, and as soon as you see the first hint of smoke, add the zucchini and ¼ teaspoon kosher salt. Shake and stir to distribute the zucchini slices evenly in the pan so they all get browned. Cook over high heat until tender and nicely browned on both sides, 5 to 7 minutes. Add to the colander and gently fold with the onions and peppers.

Note: If the juices in the pan look black and burned at any time, rinse the pan with water and wipe it out. If not,

leave the cooked-on juices intact; they'll add flavor to the final dish.

Finish with the eggplant. Dump the eggplant onto some paper towels, cover with more towels, and pat to blot up surface water. Heat 3 tablespoons olive oil in the skillet over high heat, add the eggplant (no additional salt), and shake and stir to distribute the cubes evenly in the pan so they all get browned. Cook over high heat until lightly browned on several surfaces, about 5 minutes, and then lower the heat to medium. Cook until the eggplant is very tender—not at all al dente—another 13 to 15 minutes. Fold into the other vegetables.

Hang in there, you're almost done.

Add the last tablespoon olive oil to the pan and heat over medium-high heat. Add the garlic and let sizzle for about 30 seconds, then add the tomatoes and all their juices and ¼ teaspoon kosher salt. Cook until the tomatoes collapse slightly and the juices thicken and darken a bit, 3 to 5 minutes. As you're cooking, scrape the bottom of the pan to deglaze all the cooked-on vegetable juices. Add to the colander, scraping out all the juice from the skillet, and fold everything together.

Let the vegetables rest, then reduce the juices. Now let the vegetables sit in the colander for 15 to 20 minutes. At that point, you should have around ½ cup liquid in the bowl. Pour it into a small saucepan, heat until gently boiling, and boil until the liquid is reduced until just about ¼ cup. The flavor should be very bright and intense. Add the lemon juice, lemon zest, and a few drops of the hot sauce to taste. Fold this glaze into the vegetables, along with the basil, parsley, and mint (if using). Taste for salt and add more if needed.

Serve now or later. Serve soon, if you want it to be warm, or let the ratatouille sit at room temperature for awhile and serve at room temperature.

Martha Holmberg, the former publisher and editor in chief of Fine Cooking, is the food editor of The Oregonian newspaper in Portland.

great ideas for extra ratatouille



Simple Provençal Vegetable Tart

Serves four as a main dish, or eight as an appetizer.

Store-bought puff pastry makes a flaky base for savory ratatouille and cheese. Serve big squares for dinner, or smaller ones for appetizers.

1 9½x9½-inch sheet puff pastry, fully thawed if frozen (thaw overnight in fridge if possible)

Flour, for rolling

8 oil-packed anchovy fillets, drained and chopped

1 to 1¼ cups Roasted or Sautéed Ratatouille (see the recipes on pp. 55–56)

½ cup crumbled feta

2 tablespoons roughly chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley (optional)

Heat the oven to 425°F. Lightly flour a work surface, lay the sheet of pastry out, and gently roll until it measures about 11x15 inches. Slide the pastry onto a baking sheet. Prick the pastry all over with a fork, at about 1-inch intervals.

Gently stir the anchovies into the ratatouille. Spread the ratatouille evenly over the pastry, to within an inch of the borders. Distribute the feta over the tart.

Bake in the heated oven until the pastry is puffed and browned (including on the bottom), 18 to 25 minutes. Slide onto a cutting board, sprinkle with the parsley, and cut into squares or strips. Serve warm or at room temperature.

White Bean & Ratatouille Gratin

Serves four as a side dish, or two as a main dish.

This is fabulous next to a simple lamb chop or roast chicken, and it can even stand on its own as a vegetarian main dish.

2 cups Roasted or Sautéed Ratatouille (see the recipes on pp. 55–56)

1 15- to 16-ounce can white beans (such as cannellini), rinsed and drained well

2 tablespoons roughly chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley

2 tablespoons roughly chopped fresh basil

Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

½ cup fresh breadcrumbs

¼ cup grated Parmigiano-Reggiano

1 tablespoon olive oil

Heat the oven to 425°F. Fold together the ratatouille, beans, parsley, and basil. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Put the mixture into a small (1½-quart) gratin pan or baking dish.

In a small bowl, toss the bread crumbs, Parmigiano, and olive oil until well blended. Sprinkle the crumb mixture over the gratin. Bake until the ingredients are heated through, the topping is lightly browned, and the juices are bubbling around the edges, 20 to 30 minutes. Let cool for about 10 minutes before serving.

Make-ahead tip: You can mix the vegetables, beans, and herbs ahead of time, but don't top with the crumbs until you're ready to bake, or they'll get too soaked with oil.



Fill an **omelet** with a spoonful of ratatouille and some crumbled goat cheese.

Toss ratatouille with hot penne **pasta**, grated Parmigiano-Reggiano, and a few spoonfuls of pasta cooking water to loosen.

Layer **lasagna** noodles with ratatouille, a little tomato sauce, fresh mozzarella, and grated Parmigiano-Reggiano; bake until warm and bubbly.

Mix ratatouille with some chopped brine-cured black olives, capers, and grated orange zest and pile onto toasted baguette slices as an **appetizer**.

Butterfly a boneless, skinless **chicken** breast, pound to an even thickness, layer with a slice of prosciutto, a spoonful of ratatouille, and a sprinkling of Fontina. Roll up, secure with toothpicks, season with salt, dredge in flour, and sauté gently.

Arrange some ratatouille in individual **gratin** dishes or cazuelas with three jumbo peeled and deveined shrimp, Greek black olives, crumbled feta, and a drizzle of olive oil. Bake until the shrimp are pink and everything's hot and bubbly, and serve as a first course.


Grill some meaty **fish** steaks, such as halibut, tuna, or swordfish, and top with a spoonful of ratatouille and a squeeze of lemon. Or use ratatouille as a bed for slices of grilled **lamb**.

Use a scoop of cold ratatouille as part of a Niçoise **salad**, along with steamed new potatoes, green beans, tuna in oil, black olives, and hard-cooked egg. Drizzle with a lemon-garlic vinaigrette. ♦

Think Pink

Strawberries make this quintessential summer beverage as dazzling to look at as it is refreshing to drink

BY ABIGAIL JOHNSON DODGE

A close-up photograph of a glass filled with pink lemonade. A slice of lemon is perched on the rim of the glass. The background is a soft-focus view of another similar glass and a colorful, abstract pattern on a surface.

On a hot summer day, what could be more refreshing than a glass of lemonade? Well, a glass of pink lemonade, of course. It might seem easiest to reach for a store-bought version, but the truth is that making this classic at home is effortless, and you'll get a much tastier result. And there's an added benefit: When you make it from scratch, you can control the level of sweetness. With only as much sugar as necessary to balance the flavors, my lemonade isn't too tart nor too sweet—it's just about perfect.

Strawberries are the secret to this lemonade's bold hue. They lend a sweet berry contrast to the tart lemon flavor. The rest of the ingredient list is simple: lemons, water, and sugar. I start by making a variation of a simple syrup. I combine the sugar, water, and strawberries and bring the mixture to a boil. This step allows the sugar to dissolve quickly and completely, and a few minutes in the hot liquid is all it takes to coax flavor and color from the berries. A little cooling, a quick straining, some ice-cold water, lemon juice, and an ice cube or three, and you've got a refreshing pitcher of pink lemonade ready to go.

Lemonade

Pink Lemonade

Yields about 7 cups; serves six to eight.

1½ cups granulated sugar

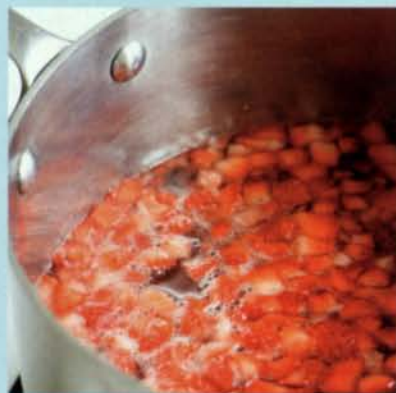
1 cup coarsely chopped fresh strawberries (about 6 ounces)

Zest of 2 lemons, peeled off in strips with a vegetable peeler (avoid the white pith)

2 cups fresh lemon juice

Combine the sugar and strawberries with 2 cups water in a medium saucepan. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat, stirring occasionally. Reduce the heat to low and simmer until the berries begin to release their color and soften slightly, about 3 minutes. Stir in the lemon zest. Set aside and let cool completely. The berries will continue to soften and release their color while the syrup cools.

Pour the cooled syrup and berries into a fine sieve set over a pitcher or



bowl. With the back of a spoon or a rubber spatula, press lightly on the berries to extract most of the syrup. Discard the solids.

Add the lemon juice and 2½ cups cold water to the syrup mixture and stir until well blended.

The lemonade can be served immediately over ice or refrigerated for up to two days.

Garnish options, by the glass or by the pitcher:

Sliced strawberries, melon, or peaches.

Whole blueberries, raspberries, or pitted cherries.

Sprigs of fresh thyme, verbena, mint, or rosemary.

Lemongrass slices or straws, lemon or lime slices, or ginger slices.

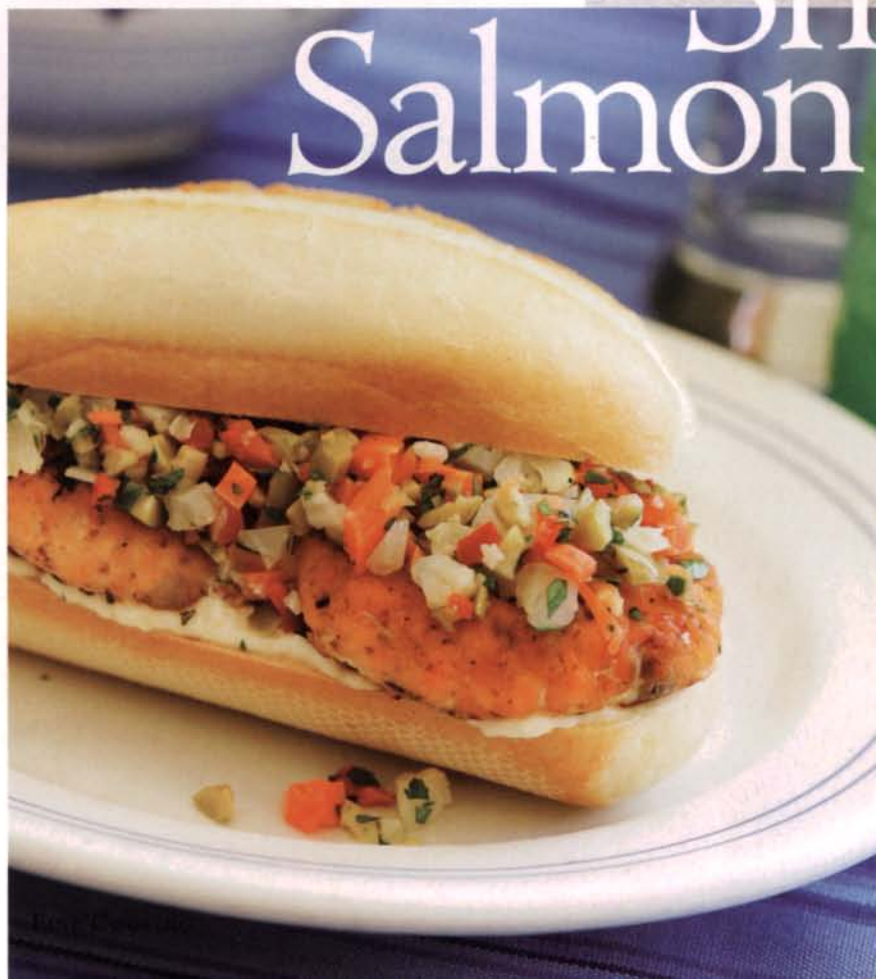
Abigail Johnson Dodge is a contributing editor to Fine Cooking. ♦

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Crab Shrimp Salmon



Make the best
fish and seafood
cakes with recipes
from Seattle's
favorite chef

BY TOM DOUGLAS

Shrimp & Scallop Cakes

Yields eight cakes; serves four.

- 2 whole star anise (for sources, see p. 80)**
- 4 tablespoons peanut or canola oil; more as needed for frying**
- 2 cups stemmed and sliced (¼-inch-thick) shiitake mushrooms (from about two 3½-ounce packages)**
- ½ pound shrimp, any size, peeled and deveined**
- ¾ pound fresh dry-packed sea scallops**
- 2 tablespoons mirin (sweetened rice wine)**
- 2 tablespoons roughly chopped fresh cilantro, plus 8 cilantro leaves**
- 2 tablespoons thinly sliced scallions (both white and green parts; about 2 scallions)**
- ½ teaspoon Asian sesame oil**
- Kosher salt**

Gingered Soy Sauce (see the recipe at right)

Grind the star anise in a clean electric coffee grinder.

Heat 2 tablespoons of the oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Add the shiitakes and sauté, stirring as needed, until cooked through, golden, and slightly crisp around the edges, 5 to 7 minutes. Transfer to a cutting board, let cool, and then coarsely chop.

Coarsely chop the shrimp and transfer to a large bowl. Put the scallops in a food processor and purée until smooth. Add the scallops to the bowl of shrimp. Add 1 teaspoon of the star anise, along with the shiitakes, mirin, cilantro, scallions, sesame oil, and ½ teaspoon kosher salt. Combine well using a rubber spatula—don't worry about over-mixing. Cover the bowl and chill for 30 minutes or more. Discard any remaining ground star anise or save for another use.

Turn the mixture out onto a baking sheet and portion it into eight equal mounds. With wet hands, shape each mound into a flattened cake about 2½ inches wide and ½ inch thick. Press a

cilantro leaf, nice side up, onto the top of each cake.

Heat the oven to 200°F. Heat 1 tablespoon of the oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium heat. Using a rubber spatula, transfer four of the cakes to the pan with the cilantro-leaf side down. Cook until lightly browned on both sides and cooked through, turning once or twice with a spatula, 5 to 6 minutes total cooking time. Transfer to a plate, cover, and keep warm in the oven. Wipe the skillet clean and then cook the remaining cakes as above, using the remaining 1 tablespoon oil.

Serve hot, with ramekins of the gingered soy sauce for dipping.

Gingered Soy Sauce

Yields about ⅔ cup.

Sambal badjak and sambal oelek are Indonesian hot chile pastes. You can find them in well-stocked supermarkets and in Asian specialty markets (for other sources, see p. 80). You could also use Chinese chile paste.

- 1 piece fresh ginger, about 1½x2 inches, peeled**
- ⅓ cup soy sauce**
- 3 tablespoons mirin (sweetened rice wine)**
- 1 tablespoon plus 1 teaspoon granulated sugar**
- ¾ teaspoon sambal badjak or sambal oelek, or to taste**
- 2 teaspoons fresh lime juice**

Grate the ginger on a box grater using the large holes. Put the ginger in your palm and squeeze the ginger juice into a small bowl; discard the grated ginger. In a small saucepan, combine 1½ teaspoons ginger juice with the soy sauce, mirin, and sugar. Warm the mixture over medium heat, stirring, just until the sugar dissolves. Transfer to a small bowl, and stir in the sambal and lime juice. Serve or store covered and refrigerated for up to three days.

When I was 17 years old and just hired on as a cook's helper at the Hotel du Pont in downtown Wilmington, Delaware, I remember looking up at chef Jim Irby, a tall, intimidating man. He glanced at me while draining 50 pounds of blue jumbo lump crabmeat, and said, "There ain't no finer creature from all the seas." He kind of winked then, as if letting me into some secret brotherhood. Chef Irby made the finest crab cakes, crab imperial, and crab-stuffed scampi that I ever tasted.

After moving to Seattle in 1977, I looked around the area for the dish of my roots. In Delaware, crab cakes were served from the boardwalk to the boardroom, but in Seattle I couldn't find one restaurant featuring the local Dungeness crab—or King or Snow, for that

A naturally make-ahead dish

Most fish and seafood cakes are easier to cook if you first chill them a few hours, or even overnight. I look at this as an advantage, because I can get most of the work done either that morning or the day before. Then when family and friends gather, all I have to do is fire up the stove and get out my favorite skillet.

reader review

A Fine Cooking reader gave these recipes a real-world test. Here are the results:

"All three cakes and sauces were easy to make, and preparing them ahead really helped—they were simple to cook when my guests arrived. The shrimp & scallop cakes had an excellent flavor and texture, and the crab cakes were sweet and fresh—and didn't have any pesky fillers like many restaurant crab cakes do. These would be perfect for a summer cocktail party, or even for an easy and indulgent week-night dinner."

*—Shari Williams,
Burbank, California*

matter—in any way other than stir-fries, steams, and cocktails. In 1980, I was hired as the chef for a brand-new restaurant called Café Sport, and from the first draft of the menu, Dungeness crab cakes were a centerpiece. I still serve the very same ones at my own restaurant, Etta's Seafood, 26 years later. They're the most popular item on the menu—thanks to the lessons Chef Irby taught me.

The rule for making great crab cakes and fish cakes—heck, I've even made duck and chicken cakes—is basically the same. This is not a time to use up old ingredients. The key to seafood cakes is to buy the freshest possible ingredients, handle them gently, season with restraint, and pan-fry until you've got a crisp, brown crust and a succulent center.

It's fun to add interesting flavors to fish and seafood cakes—as long as you don't overdo it. In these recipes I use a range of seasonings, from star anise and sesame oil to Tabasco and fresh thyme. For the final touch, I match each seafood cake with a simple complementary sauce or relish.

This crab cake is light and creamy inside with a nice golden crust.



Sorting out your crabmeat choices

You have choices when it comes to crabmeat for crab cakes: You can begin with live crabs and cook and pick the meat yourself (for sources, see p. 80; for cooking and cleaning instructions, see p. 70). Or you can buy already-picked fresh crabmeat (shown in the photo at left), which comes in cans or plastic tubs. You can find it in the fresh seafood section of many supermarkets

and at your local fish market (your best bet). That's what I used for the recipe in this article and the results were excellent.

Understanding crabmeat lingo. If you see a package labeled "jumbo lump blue crabmeat," grab it—I think it makes the best-textured crab cakes because the meat is plump, white, and sweet, with little or no shell. Also very good is "backfin lump

crabmeat," lovely big white pieces that come from the crab's backfin and have very little shell. Some cans are labeled simply "lump crabmeat"; that's your next best bet. The word "lump" is your clue that you'll find nice big, juicy pieces of sweet crabmeat and not shredded stringy bits.

Much of the picked crabmeat on the market comes from blue crabs, the favorite crab variety

on the East and Gulf Coasts. But on the West Coast, Dungeness is the crab of choice, and picked is also available.

The saltiness of crabmeat varies. Whichever crabmeat you use for your crab cakes, it's a good idea to taste the meat for salt and adjust the amount of salt in the recipe as needed. Dungeness, in particular, can be quite salty.



Etta's New Crab Cakes

*Yields eight crab cakes;
serves four.*

8 slices white sandwich bread
3 tablespoons plus 2 teaspoons
coarsely chopped fresh flat-
leaf parsley
1 large egg yolk
1 tablespoon cider vinegar
1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
1 tablespoon coarsely chopped
red bell pepper
1 tablespoon coarsely chopped
onion

1 teaspoon Tabasco sauce
½ teaspoon sweet paprika
½ teaspoon chopped fresh
thyme

Kosher salt and freshly ground
black pepper

¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
¼ cup sour cream

1 pound fresh or pasteurized
blue lump crabmeat, drained
and picked clean of shell, or
1 pound fresh Dungeness
crabmeat (note: if you're
using Dungeness, squeeze
the crabmeat lightly to remove
excess liquid)

6 tablespoons unsalted butter
Red-Eye Cocktail Sauce (see the
recipe at right)
4 lemon wedges

Tear up the bread and pulse it in a food processor to make fine, soft crumbs (you should have about 3½ cups). Pour the crumbs into a 9x13-inch (or similar-size) dish and mix in 3 tablespoons of the parsley.

In a food processor, combine the egg yolk, vinegar, mustard, bell pepper, onion, Tabasco, paprika, thyme, ½ teaspoon kosher salt, ¼ teaspoon pepper, and the remaining 2 teaspoons parsley. Pulse to finely mince the vegetables and combine all the ingredients. With the motor running, slowly add the oil

through the feed tube until the mixture emulsifies and forms a thin mayonnaise.

Transfer the mayonnaise to a large bowl and stir in the sour cream. Use a rubber spatula to gently fold in the crabmeat, taking care not to break up the lumps. Pour the crab mixture onto a large rimmed baking sheet and portion it into eight equal mounds. Gently shape each mound into a patty about 3 inches wide and ½ inch thick. (The mixture will be quite wet.)

Using a spatula to move the patties, lightly dredge each patty on both sides in the reserved breadcrumb mixture. Cover the crab cakes with plastic wrap and chill for at least 1 hour. (You can leave the cakes right in the pan of breadcrumbs and chill them as long as overnight.)

Heat the oven to 200°F. Heat 3 tablespoons of the butter in a large nonstick skillet over medium heat. When the butter melts, add four crab cakes to the pan. Gently fry the crab cakes until they're golden brown on both sides and heated through, turning just once with a spatula, about 4 minutes per side. Transfer the cakes to a plate (don't cover) and keep them warm in the oven. Wipe the skillet clean and cook the remaining crab cakes as above, using the remaining 3 tablespoons butter.

Serve hot, accompanied by ramekins of cocktail sauce and lemon wedges.

Make-ahead tip: You can shape the crab cakes up to 24 hours before you cook them.

Red-Eye Cocktail Sauce

Yields about 1¼ cups.

This makes enough sauce for a double batch of crab cakes, or you can save the sauce and use it with poached shrimp, pan-fried oysters, or other seafood.

1½ teaspoons finely ground
coffee, preferably dark or
espresso roast

1 cup tomato ketchup

3 tablespoons prepared
horseradish

1½ tablespoons fresh lemon
juice

2¼ teaspoons Worcestershire
sauce

Put the finely ground coffee in a paper coffee filter cone set in a strainer over a Pyrex measuring cup or small heatproof bowl. Bring a small amount of water to a boil. Pour about 2 tablespoons (the exact amount isn't important) boiling water into the filter cone and allow the liquid coffee to drain off. Discard the liquid and transfer the moistened coffee grounds from the paper cone to a bowl—you may need to scrape the coffee off the paper with a small spoon. Add the ketchup, horseradish, lemon juice, and Worcestershire, and stir. Serve immediately, or cover and refrigerate for up to a week.

tip: When making crab cakes, mix the crabmeat gently so you don't break up the lumps. Fold the crabmeat and other ingredients with a rubber spatula as if you're gently folding a cake batter.

Creole Salmon Cakes

Yields eight cakes; serves four.

The relish that accompanies these slightly spicy cakes reminds me of the pickley olive salad you get in a New Orleans muffuletta sandwich; in fact, as a variation, I like to make salmon cake sandwiches.

FOR THE SALMON CAKES:

- 1 pound raw salmon fillets (preferably wild), skin and pin bones removed, cut into 1-inch chunks**
- 1 large egg**
- 1 tablespoon country-style (grainy, but not whole-grain) Dijon mustard**
- 2 teaspoons finely grated lemon zest**
- 1 teaspoon hot sauce, preferably Crystal Hot Sauce (for sources, see p. 80)**
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper**
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh thyme**
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil**

Giardiniera Relish (see the recipe at right)

FOR THE SANDWICH VARIATION:

- 4 5- to 6-inch hoagie or sub rolls or lengths of soft French or Italian bread from a baguette-type loaf (the bread shouldn't be too dense nor the crust too crunchy)**
- ½ cup mayonnaise, or to taste**

Put the salmon in a food processor and pulse until chopped medium coarse, two or three 1-second pulses. Take care not to overprocess. There should still be some chunky pieces; you don't want a completely smooth

purée. In a medium bowl, lightly beat the egg. Add the salmon and combine with a rubber spatula. Add the mustard, lemon zest, hot sauce, 1½ teaspoons kosher salt, and ½ teaspoon pepper; mix until well combined. Cover the bowl with plastic and chill for at least 30 minutes or up to 4 hours.

Remove the salmon mixture from the refrigerator, turn it out onto a baking sheet, and portion it into eight equal mounds. With wet hands, gently shape each mound into a 2½-inch-wide patty. Sprinkle a pinch of the thyme on both sides of each cake.

Heat the olive oil in a large (12-inch) nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. When the oil is hot, add the cakes and reduce the heat to medium. Cook the cakes, turning once, until nicely browned on both sides and the interior no longer looks raw, 5 to 6 minutes total cooking time. Be careful not to overcook the cakes. Transfer the cakes to a plate and cover to keep them warm. Serve hot, with the giardiniera relish on the side.

Variation: To make sandwiches, slice each roll in half and pull out a little bit of the insides. Spread some mayonnaise on the bottom halves of each roll, and place two salmon cakes over each bottom half. Scoop some of the giardiniera relish over the top halves of the rolls, including some of the juices, and gently press the two sides of each sandwich together. Cut each sandwich in half and serve.

tip: Be careful not to process the salmon too finely; you don't want a completely smooth purée. If you don't have a food processor, you can use a chef's knife to very finely chop the raw fish.

This relish reminds me of the pickley salad in a New Orleans muffuletta sandwich.

Giardiniera Relish

Yields about 2 cups.

Giardiniera is an Italian-style mixed pickle that typically contains pearl onions, cauliflower, hot peppers, cucumbers, carrots, and celery. You can find it in glass jars in the supermarket.

- 2 cups drained Italian giardiniera pickle**
- ½ cup coarsely chopped pimento-stuffed green olives**
- ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil**
- 3 tablespoons chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley**
- Freshly ground black pepper**

Stem and seed any whole peppers from the giardiniera and then coarsely chop all the giardiniera. Put the chopped vegetables in a medium bowl and add the olives, olive oil, parsley, and ¼ teaspoon black pepper. Mix well. Serve immediately or refrigerate, covered, for up to five days.





How to make mini fish cakes

Here's how to vary the recipes on pp. 61, 63, and 64 to make bite-size cakes to serve as appetizers.

To make mini Shrimp & Scallop Cakes, portion the mixture into 24 small mounds, shape into small cakes, press a small cilantro leaf on each one, and cook as directed in the recipe.

To make mini Crab Cakes, shape the crab cake mixture into 24 small cakes, about

1 heaping tablespoon each. Cook the crab cakes as directed in the recipe in batches of as many cakes as will fit comfortably in the skillet without crowding, and cook 2 to 3 minutes per side.

To make mini Salmon Cakes, portion the mixture into 24 small mounds (about $\frac{3}{4}$ ounce each), gently shape into cakes, and cook until nicely browned on both sides, 3 to 4 minutes total.

Chef Tom Douglas is the owner of four Seattle restaurants. His latest book is I Love Crab Cakes. ♦

Simple Summer Fruit Cakes

Here's an easy method for incredibly moist cakes with pretty fruit toppings



BY ABIGAIL JOHNSON DODGE

I love fruit cakes. No, not those leaden loaves packed with candied fruit and doused in booze. My fruit cakes are another creature entirely—moist, light, and tender, they're a great way to show off summer's gorgeous fruits. And you don't have to be a baking guru to make them. They're easy enough for novice bakers to prepare and can be made ahead and stored for a few days wrapped in plastic—in fact, I think they taste even better after a day or two. These

cakes are terrific for breakfast or paired with summery picnic fare. Add a drizzle of berry sauce or a dollop of lightly sweetened whipped cream and they turn into a great finale for any summer dinner.

The batters for all three cakes couldn't be more user-friendly. Made with everyday ingredients you'll most likely have on hand, they whip together easily with a hand-held or stand mixer, with the final additions of flour and liquid done by hand to ensure

even mixing without overworking the batter. After the cake has been baking for about 15 minutes, I scatter the fruit over the top. Besides being a time-saving technique (I can prepare the fruit while the cake starts baking), letting the batter begin to set keeps the fruit nestled on top or dispersed in the batter, rather than sinking to the bottom.

You can use just about any summer fruit you like to top the cakes. Just reach for whatever looks ripest and smells most

fragrant. Give stone fruit—like peaches, nectarines, plums, and apricots—a good sniff. The aroma should be strong and vibrant, with the fruit “giving” ever so slightly at the shoulders when gently pressed. Look for plump blueberries or raspberries with good color and no mold. But if all you find is less-than-wonderful fruit, add a squeeze of lemon juice and some extra sugar to the prepared fruit before tossing in the remaining topping ingredients.



A zesty
combination of
fresh ginger and
bright, ripe plums



Gingery Plum Cake

Serves eight to ten.

Apricots or pluots can also work in this recipe.

- 6 ounces (1½ cups) unbleached all-purpose flour; more for the pan**
- 1 teaspoon ground ginger**
- ¾ teaspoon baking powder**
- ¼ teaspoon baking soda**
- ¼ teaspoon table salt**
- 3 ounces (6 tablespoons) unsalted butter, at room temperature; more for the pan**
- 1 cup packed light brown sugar**
- 2 large eggs**
- 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract**
- ¾ cup (5½ ounces) sour cream**

FOR THE TOPPING:

- 1 plum (or pluot or ripe apricot), halved, pitted, and cut into ⅛- to ¼-inch slices**
- 2 teaspoons finely grated fresh ginger**
- 3 tablespoons firmly packed light brown sugar**
- 1 tablespoon unbleached all-purpose flour**
- Whipped cream, for garnish (optional)**

Position a rack in the center of the oven and heat the oven to 350°F. Lightly butter a 9x2-inch round cake pan. Line the bottom with a parchment circle cut to fit the pan and lightly flour the sides, tapping out the excess.

In a medium bowl, whisk the flour, ground ginger, baking powder, baking soda, and salt. In a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment (or with a hand mixer), beat the butter

and sugar on medium-high until well blended and fluffy, about 3 minutes. Add the eggs, one at a time, beating on medium speed until just blended and adding the vanilla with the second egg. Using a wide rubber spatula, fold in half the dry ingredients, then the sour cream, and then the remaining dry ingredients. Scrape the batter into the prepared pan and spread evenly. Bake for 15 minutes.

Meanwhile, make the topping.

Combine the sliced fruit and the grated ginger in a small bowl and toss until the ginger is well distributed. Add the sugar and flour. Using a table fork, mix the ingredients to coat the fruit evenly. After the cake has baked for 15 minutes, scatter the topping evenly over the cake, working quickly. Don't worry about the fruit looking perfect—this is a rustic cake. Continue baking until a toothpick inserted in the center of the cake comes out clean, another 35 to 40 minutes.

Let the cake cool on a rack for 15 minutes. Run a knife around the inside edge of the pan. Using a dry dishtowel to protect your hands, lay a rack on top of the cake pan and, holding onto both pan and rack, invert the cake. Lift the pan from the cake. Peel away the parchment. Lay a flat serving plate on the bottom of the cake and flip the cake one more time so that the fruit is on top. Serve warm or at room temperature, with whipped cream if you like.

Storage:

Just cover the cooled cakes in plastic wrap and store for up to five days at room temperature.

The secret:

Add the fruit after the cake batter has been baking for 15 minutes to keep it from sinking to the bottom.



Raspberries,
peaches, and a
touch of orange

Raspberry-Peach Cake

Serves eight to ten.

6 ounces (1⅓ cups) unbleached all-purpose flour; more for the pan
1 teaspoon baking powder
¼ teaspoon baking soda
¼ teaspoon table salt
6 tablespoons (3 ounces) unsalted butter, at room temperature; more for the pan
1 cup granulated sugar
2 large eggs
1½ teaspoons finely grated orange zest
½ teaspoon pure vanilla extract
⅔ cup plain yogurt

FOR THE TOPPING:

½ large, ripe peach or nectarine (about 3¾ ounces), halved and cut into very thin slices (aim for ⅛ inch)
¾ cup (¾ ounces) fresh raspberries
1 tablespoon granulated sugar
1 tablespoon unbleached all-purpose flour

Position a rack in the center of the oven and heat the oven to 350°F. Lightly butter a 9x2-inch round cake pan. Line the bottom with a parchment circle cut to fit the pan, lightly flour the sides, and tap out the excess.

In a medium bowl, whisk the flour, baking powder, baking soda, and salt until well blended. In a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment (or with a hand mixer), beat the butter and sugar on medium-high until well blended and fluffy, about 3 minutes. Add the eggs, one at a time, beating on medium speed until just blended, and adding the orange zest and vanilla with the second egg. Using a wide rubber spatula, fold in half the dry ingredients, then the yogurt, and then the remaining dry ingredients. Scrape the batter into the prepared pan and spread evenly. Bake for 15 minutes.

Meanwhile, make the topping. Combine the peach slices,

raspberries, sugar, and flour in a small bowl. Using a table fork, mix the ingredients to evenly coat the fruit and lightly crush the raspberries. After the cake has baked for 15 minutes, slide the oven rack out and scatter the fruit evenly over the top of the cake, working quickly. Continue baking until a toothpick inserted in the center of the cake comes out clean, another 25 to 30 minutes.

Let the cake cool on a rack for 15 minutes. Run a knife around the inside edge of the cake pan to loosen the cake. Using a dry dishtowel to protect your hands, lay a rack on top of the cake pan and, holding onto both rack and pan, invert the cake. Lift the pan from the cake. Peel away the parchment. Set a flat plate on the bottom of the cake and flip the cake one more time so that the fruit is on top. Serve warm or at room temperature.



Tip: To draw out flavor from less than perfectly ripe fruit, toss it with a little extra sugar and a squeeze of lemon juice.

Make these fruity cakes ahead—
they're even better the next day.



Blueberries in every bite

Blueberry-Lemon Cornmeal Cake

Serves eight to ten.

The combination of cornmeal and buttermilk offers both texture and tang.

6 ounces (1½ cups) unbleached all-purpose flour; more for the pan
¼ cup (1½ ounces) finely ground yellow cornmeal
1 teaspoon baking powder
¼ teaspoon baking soda
¼ teaspoon table salt
3 ounces (6 tablespoons) unsalted butter, at room temperature; more for the pan
1 cup granulated sugar

1 teaspoon finely grated lemon zest
2 large eggs
1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
½ cup buttermilk

FOR THE TOPPING:

1 cup (about 5 ounces) fresh blueberries, rinsed and well dried
1 tablespoon granulated sugar
1 tablespoon unbleached all-purpose flour

Position a rack in the center of the oven and heat the oven to 350° F. Lightly butter a 9x2-inch round cake pan. Line the bottom with a parchment round cut to

fit the pan, lightly flour the sides, and tap out the excess.

In a medium bowl, whisk the flour, cornmeal, baking powder, baking soda, and salt until well blended. In a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment (or with a hand mixer), beat the butter, sugar, and lemon zest on medium high until well blended and fluffy, about 3 minutes. Add the eggs, one at a time, beating on medium speed until just blended and adding the lemon juice with the second egg (the batter will appear curdled; don't worry). Using a wide rubber spatula, fold in half the dry ingredients, then the buttermilk, and then the remaining dry ingredients. Scrape the batter into the prepared pan and spread evenly. Bake for 15 minutes.

Meanwhile, make the topping.

Combine the blueberries, sugar, and flour in a small bowl. Using a table fork, mix the ingredients, lightly crushing the blueberries and evenly coating them with the flour and sugar. After the cake has baked for 15 minutes, slide the oven rack out and quickly scatter the blueberries evenly over the top of the cake (discard any flour and sugar that doesn't adhere to the berries). Continue baking until a toothpick inserted in the center of the cake comes out clean, another 23 to 25 minutes.

Let the cake cool on a rack for 15 minutes. Run a knife around the inside edge of the pan. Using a dry dishtowel to protect your hands, lay a rack on top of the cake pan and, holding onto both rack and pan, and invert the cake. Lift the pan from the cake. Peel away the parchment. Lay a flat serving plate on the bottom of the cake and flip the cake one more time so that the blueberries are on top. Serve warm or at room temperature.

A contributing editor to Fine Cooking, Abigail Johnson Dodge is the author of The Weekend Baker. ♦

How to pit a peach

Peaches (or nectarines) crown the Raspberry-Peach Cake on p. 68. Here, Abby Dodge shares her techniques for pitting these occasionally stubborn fruits.



1 Using a paring knife, start at the stem end of the fruit and cut through to the pit. Run the knife all the way around the fruit, keeping the blade up against the pit, finishing where you started.



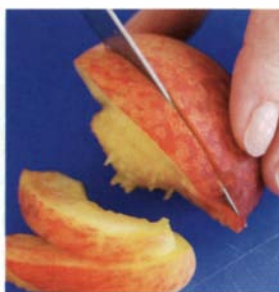
2 Hold the fruit in your hands and gently twist each half in opposite directions until one half comes free from the pit. Set that half aside.



3 Remove the pit from the remaining half by loosening one end with your finger or the tip of a knife.

If the pit doesn't come free, don't force it

You'll only damage the flesh if you force out the pit. Instead, cut off a few sections from the half. You will then be able to wiggle the pit free.



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BY JENNIFER ARMENTROUT

in the *Fine Cooking* pantry


Cornichons

Crisp cornichons contribute a tangy edge to the Roasted Potato Salad with Crispy Prosciutto and Mustard Vinaigrette on p. 52. These French-style sour gherkins are unripe baby cucumbers that have been pickled in a vinegary brine. Cornichons—French for “little horns”—are traditionally served with pâtés and cured meats and fish. If cornichons aren't available in your area, see p. 80 for a mail-order source, or try substituting baby dill pickles.



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Fish Brochettes with Chilli Oil and Pumpkin and Courgette Chutney

Serves 4-6

Pumpkin and Courgette Chutney

- 1 cup peeled firm-fleshed pumpkin, finely chopped
- 1 cup courgettes, diced into ½-inch cubes
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 1 cup soft brown sugar
- 3.5 ounces white wine vinegar
- 1 tbsp tomato paste
- 3.5 ounces water

Juice of ½ lemon

Chilli Oil

- 2 cups oil
- .35 ounce dried chillies

- 1.1 pounds salmon fillet, skinned and cut into 1-inch cubes
- 1.1 pounds swordfish or monkfish, skinned and cut into 1-inch cubes
- Juice of ½ lime

Pumpkin and courgette chutney: place the pumpkin in a pan with the courgette, onion, sugar, vinegar, tomato paste and 3.5 ounces water. Bring to the boil, stirring to dissolve the sugar. Reduce the heat to low and simmer gently for 1 hour or until soft and pulpy - the liquid should evaporate, leaving enough syrup to keep the mixture moist. Pour into a bowl to cool and cover and refrigerate overnight.

Chilli oil: warm the oil and add the dried chillies. Remove from the heat, infuse for 24 hours and strain.

Place 12 wooden skewers in a shallow dish. Pour the lemon juice over, adding a little cold water to just cover. Leave for 30 minutes and drain well.

Thread the cubed fish alternately onto the skewers and place in a shallow glass or ceramic dish. Combine the lime juice and chilli oil and pour over the kebabs, turning well to coat all sides. Cover and refrigerate for 30 minutes.

Preheat the grill to high. When hot, grill the brochettes for 5-8 minutes on each side or until lightly golden and cooked through. Serve hot with the chutney.

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Gelatin desserts grow up

If you think of gelatin desserts as overly sweet and strictly for kids, then you might be surprised at how pleasing a homemade version can be. With unflavored gelatin powder, you can make gelatin desserts out of just about any liquid, including your favorite juice-based cocktails. In the heat of summer, the chilly, slick, jiggly texture of these desserts can be a welcome treat. Here's a recipe to get you started, and some tips to help you venture out on your own.

Tips for getting a perfect gel

Don't overdo the gelatin.

Use 1 generous teaspoon gelatin powder per cup of liquid, more or less. The amount you use depends on how gelled you like your gelatin. You may have to experiment a bit at first—just keep in mind that too much gelatin creates a bouncy texture. A ¼-ounce packet of gelatin powder contains about 2¾ teaspoons.

Thoroughly dissolve the gelatin. Sprinkle it over a cool liquid and let it “bloom,” or soften, for several minutes before heating to dissolve the gelatin. Be sure the gelatin dissolves completely or the finished texture won't be smooth.

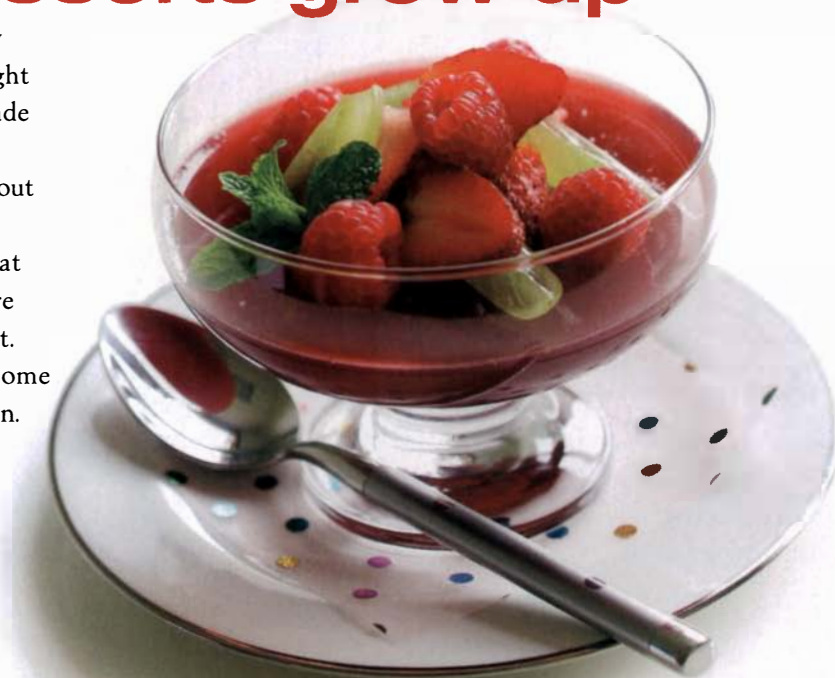
Chill partially before adding any fruit. Let the gelatin chill until it's thickened to the consistency of unbeaten egg whites, and then stir in the fruit. Otherwise, the fruit may sink or float.

food science

Beware of certain fruits

Not all fruits work well in gelatin desserts: Figs, guavas, kiwis, mangos, melons, papayas, and pineapples, for example, contain enzymes that prevent gelatin from setting, no matter how long you let it chill. These enzymes have the unique ability to break down protein, and gelatin is, in fact, protein. (The unflavored gelatin we use in recipes is derived from beef and pork collagen, which is a protein.) It's all right to use cooked or canned versions of these fruits, though, because the heat of cooking and the canning process deactivates the enzymes. As a garnish, the fresh fruits would be fine.

—Kimberly Y. Masibay



Pomegranate Sangria Gelatin

Serves six.

Check your supermarket's fresh produce or bottled juice section for pomegranate juice.

2 cups pure pomegranate juice, such as Pom brand
4 teaspoons unflavored gelatin powder
⅓ cup granulated sugar
1 cup dry white wine
¼ cup fresh, strained orange juice
2 tablespoons fresh, strained lime juice
1½ cups mixed small-diced or sliced fresh fruit, such as berries, peaches, plums, mangos, oranges, honeydew melon, grapes, or bananas
Small mint sprigs for garnish (optional)

Pour 1 cup of the pomegranate juice into a small saucepan. Sprinkle the gelatin and then the sugar over the juice. Let sit for 5 minutes. Set the saucepan over medium heat and stir until the gelatin and sugar completely dissolve. Off the heat, stir in the remaining 1 cup pomegranate juice, along with the wine, orange juice, and lime juice. Pour the mixture into six wineglasses or footed dessert glasses. Refrigerate until firm, 3 to 4 hours.

To serve, mound the mixed fruit on top of the gelatin and garnish with the mint sprigs, if using.

Buy fregola, or make your own toasted pasta

Fregola, also known as succu or Sardinian cous-cous, is made from coarsely ground semolina and water. Compared to the more familiar North African style of couscous, which is very small and light, fregola is larger and more toothsome, and it has a deliciously nutty flavor because it's toasted.

Unless you have a good Italian specialty store in your area, fregola can be hard to find. So if you want to make the Fregola with Grill-Marinated Red Peppers & Zucchini on p. 39 and you can't find fregola, you can order it (see p. 80 for a source), or you can substitute. We got



great results using acini di pepe, a tiny spherical pasta that's often added to soup. It's available in many supermarkets. Israeli couscous and orzo or other tiny pasta shapes are also options.

To mimic the nutty flavor of fregola, toast the pasta or Israeli couscous in a large, dry

skillet over medium-low heat, tossing occasionally, until it browns a bit, about 10 minutes. If using Israeli couscous, rinse it with cold water for 10 seconds after boiling to prevent overcooking. Pasta substitutes don't need to be rinsed.



Discover halloumi, a cheese you can grill

Halloumi, from Cyprus, has a lot going for it. Traditionally made from goat's and sheep's milk, this cheese has a great chewy texture and a mellow yet briny flavor that hints of mint. Though halloumi is perfectly tasty when eaten fresh with bread and fruits and vegetables like watermelon, figs, cucumbers, tomatoes, or olives, the coolest thing about halloumi is that, when heated, it softens but doesn't melt, so you can grill it, pan-fry it, or pop it under the broiler. Cooked halloumi gets a tasty brown crust and a soft gooey center. You'll find a recipe that pairs pan-fried halloumi with a fennel compote on p. 86c.

A marinade makes halloumi even better. Soak sliced halloumi in olive oil, lemon juice, red pepper flakes, chopped garlic, and fresh oregano for several hours, then eat it right out of the marinade or throw it on the grill—it's delicious in a BLT or tucked into a pita with a slab of ripe tomato and a drizzle of the marinade. For grilling, slices that are about 1/3 inch thick work best.

If halloumi is too salty for your taste, simmer it in water for about 5 minutes. This also softens the cheese, so if you intend to grill it, chill it until firm.

Look for halloumi in the cheese section of your local market, or see p. 80 for a mail-order source. Halloumi keeps well in the refrigerator and can also be frozen.

—Allison Ebri

Chorizo: Ready to eat, or not?



Chorizo is a spicy pork sausage that hails from Spain, though many countries that have a history of Spanish colonization have their own versions as well. Some chorizos are fully cured and ready to eat; others are meant to be cooked before eating. To make the New York Strip Steak with Sweet Pepper-Chorizo Butter

Shopping for chorizo

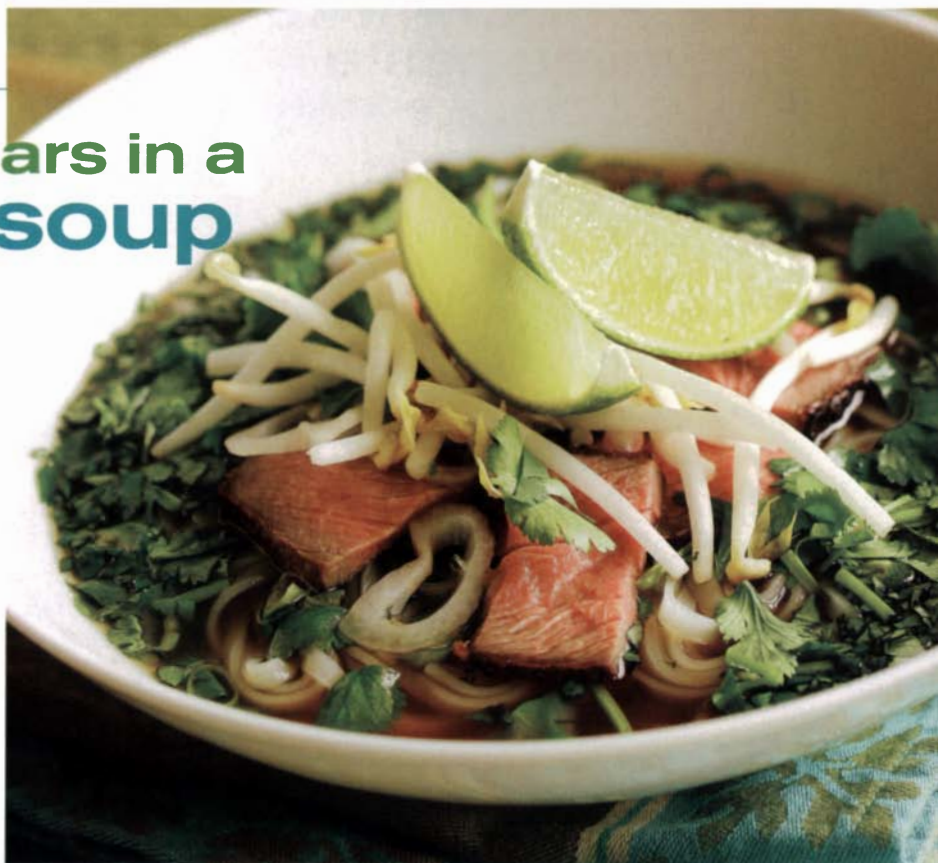
- ❖ Look for imported Spanish or domestic Spanish-style chorizo; most are dry-cured and ready to eat. Mexican chorizo is more often a fresh sausage sold in bulk rather than in links. Don't use this style for the chorizo butter.
- ❖ If there are cooking instructions on the label, it's likely that the chorizo shouldn't be eaten raw.
- ❖ Note its position in the store. If it's in the cheese or deli case, it's probably ready to eat. If it's in the meat case, it's probably meant to be cooked.
- ❖ If it seems hard and dry (a sign of curing), chances are it's ready to eat.
- ❖ If you're unsure, consider ordering it by mail. For a source, see p. 80.

on p. 44, you need a chorizo that's ready to eat because it won't be cooked before it's mixed into the butter. While testing this recipe, however, we discovered that not all chorizo is clearly marked if it's ready to eat. See above for some tips for figuring it out.

leftovers:

seared steak stars in a fast, fresh soup

Phở is a classic Vietnamese beef noodle soup. Authentic phở (pronounced FUH) involves making a long-simmering spiced beef broth from scratch to pour over cooked rice noodles and thinly sliced raw beef, so the heat of the broth cooks the beef. The soup is garnished with lots of bright, fresh ingredients, like herbs, scallions, bean sprouts, and lime. This superfast version calls for doctoring store-bought broth with the same spices you'd find in real phở, and in place of the raw meat, it uses thinly sliced leftover steak from the story on p. 41. It's not the real thing, but it comes close to being just as tasty, especially on a busy weeknight.



Vietnamese Beef Noodle Soup with Fresh Herbs (Faux Phở)

Serves four as a main course.

- 3 whole star anise**
- 2 whole cloves**
- 1 2-inch cinnamon stick**
- ½ teaspoon fennel seeds**
- 2½ cups low-salt chicken broth, preferably Swanson's Natural Goodness brand**
- 2½ cups beef broth, preferably Pacific brand or a lower-sodium brand**
- 3 tablespoons fish sauce**
- 1 3-inch-long piece fresh ginger (1 to 1½ inches thick), unpeeled and thinly sliced**
- 8 ounces ⅛- to ¼-inch wide rice noodles**
- 8 ounces leftover Star Anise & Rosemary Rib-Eye Steak (p. 45), very thinly sliced and cut into bite-size pieces (about 1⅓ cups)**
- ⅓ cup thinly sliced scallion greens**
- ⅓ cup coarsely chopped fresh cilantro**

- ⅓ cup coarsely chopped fresh basil**
- 1 medium shallot, sliced into thin rings**
- 1 cup bean sprouts, rinsed**
- 1 lime, cut into eight wedges**
- Chile paste, such as sambal oelek, or thinly sliced fresh hot red chiles (optional)**

In a dry 3-quart or larger saucepan over medium heat, combine the star anise, cloves, cinnamon stick, and fennel seeds. Toast the spices, shaking the pan occasionally, until quite fragrant, 1 to 2 minutes. Add the chicken and beef broths, fish sauce, and ginger, and bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce the heat to medium low or low, cover, and simmer gently for 30 minutes.

Meanwhile, soak the rice noodles in cold water for 20 minutes. Bring 2 quarts water to a boil in another 3-quart or larger saucepan. Drain the rice noodles and add them to the boiling water. Give the noodles a quick stir and cook until just tender,

1 to 2 minutes—don't overcook or the noodles will get gummy. Drain the noodles and portion them into four large soup bowls.

Portion the steak, scallions, cilantro, basil, and shallot into the four bowls, scattering them over the noodles. Strain the broth into a heat-proof container, preferably one with a pouring spout, such as an 8-cup Pyrex measuring cup. You should have about 5 cups broth; if not, add water to equal 5 cups and quickly reheat the broth if necessary. Divide the broth among the four bowls, pouring it over the noodles and other ingredients. Top with the bean sprouts. Serve with the lime wedges and chile paste or chiles (if using) on the side for diners to add individually to taste.

How to cook & pick whole crabs

To make the crab cakes on p. 63, you don't need to cook and pick the crabmeat yourself; fresh or pasteurized picked meat is fine. But picking and eating crabs can be a lot of fun if you have melted butter and few a friends to join you. So if you want to give it a try, here are author Tom Douglas's tips for buying, cooking, and picking live crabs, either for crab cakes or for a pick-and-eat crab feast.

How to buy: Live East Coast blue crabs are small and sold by the dozen or the bushel. Larger West Coast Dungeness crabs are sold individually—some get as big as 4 pounds, though Tom prefers the 3-pounders. If you live in a part of the

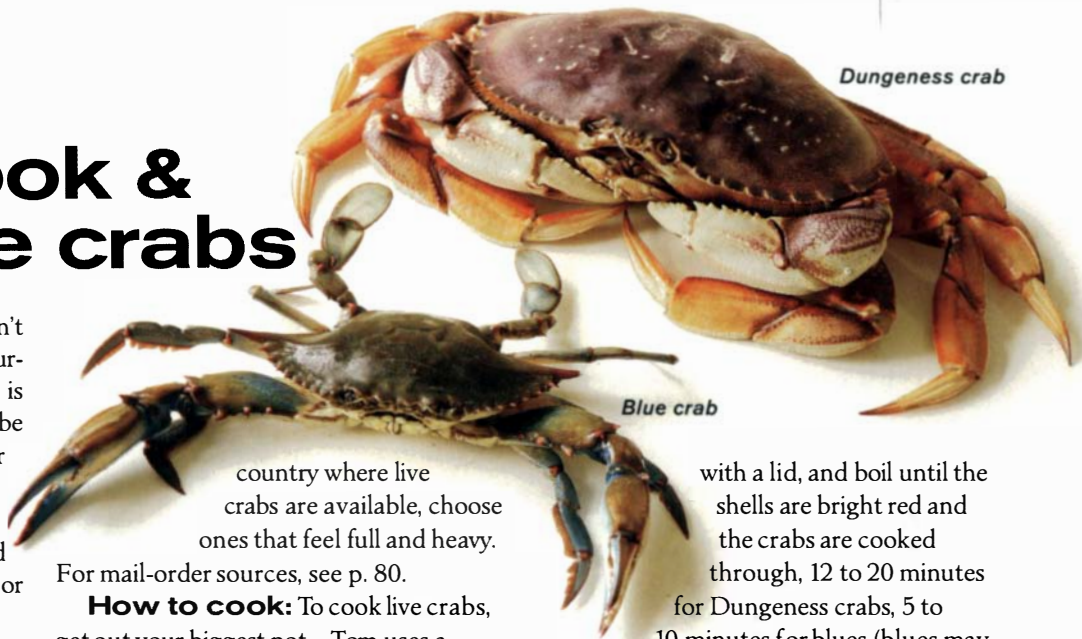
country where live crabs are available, choose ones that feel full and heavy.

For mail-order sources, see p. 80.

How to cook: To cook live crabs, get out your biggest pot—Tom uses a gigantic 33-quart black enameled canning pot. Fill the pot with a couple of gallons of water, add some sliced lemons, crushed bay leaves, and a few tablespoons of salt and bring to a boil. Add the crabs, cover

with a lid, and boil until the shells are bright red and the crabs are cooked through, 12 to 20 minutes for Dungeness crabs, 5 to 10 minutes for blues (blues may also be steamed). When the crabs

are cooked, put them in the sink and quickly rinse with cold water. Let them cool, but don't cover them with cold water because that will wash away their flavor. ♦



Dungeness crab

Blue crab

How to get to the crabmeat

Though a Dungeness crab is shown here, blue crabs can be picked the same way. Dungeness crabs have the largest crabmeat-to-shell ratio, but expect, at best, only about 1/2 pound of crabmeat from a 2- to 3-pound crab.



1 Pick up a cooked crab and pry the top shell from the body. Gently rinse the yellow substance, called the "mustard," from the crab, if you like.



2 Remove and discard the triangular gills from both sides of the crab.



3 Break the crab body in half and remove the tab-like apron from the bottom shell.



4 Using your hands or a knife, break the body halves into sections between each leg.



5 With your fingers, pick the white meat from each section. Try to pick out the crabmeat in the largest pieces possible. To break open the claws and leg knuckles, use kitchen shears or whack them with a mallet or the back of a chef's knife.

rating mayonnaise

BY LAURA GIANNATEMPO

Many of us take mayonnaise for granted. Typically, the big jar sits on a shelf in the refrigerator door, ready when we need to fix a sandwich or whip up potato salad. But have we ever paused to consider which brand is the tastiest? Or do we just buy what's comforting and familiar, what our mothers—and their mothers—always bought?

To find out which jarred mayonnaise merits a place in the fridge, eleven *Fine Cooking* staffers took part in a blind tasting of six widely available brands. To our surprise, Hellman's—everyone's childhood favorite—was surpassed by Kraft Real Mayonnaise. But both brands reveal our panelists' clear preferences when it comes to mayo in a jar: clean, mild flavors with a good balance of tartness and salt—and the egg well in the background.



KRAFT REAL MAYONNAISE

\$2.99 (32 fluid ounces)

This mayo's winning cards were a light, mildly tangy flavor, a perfect balance of vinegar and salt with just a touch of egg, and a smooth, creamy texture. Many recognized it as similar to what they usually eat and declared it the perfect blank canvas a jarred mayonnaise should be.

Runners-up Mayonnaises numbered in order of preference; prices will vary.



2 HELLMAN'S REAL MAYONNAISE

\$4.59 (30 fluid ounces)

The runner-up shared many qualities with the winning mayonnaise. It had a mild, clean flavor, a nice tart-salt balance with only slightly stronger hints of mustard, and a pleasant custardy texture. Most tasters recognized this as a familiar flavor as well. But some found that it lacked depth and was a bit "monotone."



3 CAINS ALL NATURAL MAYONNAISE

\$3.99 (32 fluid ounces)

This mayo's texture wasn't a selling point: Too thick and dense, it had an objectionable oily mouth-feel. The flavor was assertive and pleasantly tart—one taster said it was the closest of the bunch to homemade mayonnaise—but it was a little too sweet and eggy to score higher.



4 SPECTRUM ORGANIC MAYONNAISE

\$5.99 (32 fluid ounces)

The battle between Spectrum and Cains was a close one. They elicited similar opinions from panelists, who said Spectrum's texture, too, was unpleasantly thick and gummy. Its excessive tartness and cloying sweetness kept scores down as well. Several panelists detected a tin-like aftertaste.



5 WHOLE FOODS 365 MAYONNAISE

\$2.49 (32 fluid ounces)

"Too runny" is what most panelists said when asked to describe the texture of this mayonnaise. And it was also too tart. The vinegar flavor of this mayo was overwhelming, so much so that it tasted "closer to a creamy vinaigrette than to mayonnaise."



6 GEFEN MAYONNAISE

\$5.49 (32 fluid ounces)

This kosher mayonnaise is made with cottonseed oil (instead of the more common soybean oil), which may account for its "funny flavor" that threw off most panelists. Unusual flavors aside, it was bland and forgettable, with a decidedly unpopular greasy mouth-feel.

Make your own

Let's face it: Regular old jarred mayo may be fine when spread on a piece of bread to add moisture and a little oomph to a sandwich. But if you're making tartar sauce or rémoulade, you're in the market for something with a richer, more complex flavor. That's where homemade mayonnaise comes in. And you don't have to beat a whisk until your arm aches: Whipping up homemade mayo takes just a few minutes with a hand mixer.

Hand-Mixer Mayonnaise

Yields about 1 cup.

- 1 large egg yolk, at room temperature***
- 2 teaspoons cider vinegar**
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard**
- Kosher salt**
- 1 cup neutral-flavor vegetable oil (like canola or soybean oil) or pure olive oil (not extra-virgin)**
- Fresh lemon juice to taste (optional)**

In a medium-small mixing bowl, combine the egg yolk with ½ teaspoon of the vinegar, all of the mustard, and ¼ teaspoon kosher salt. Blend with an electric hand mixer on medium-low speed until well combined. With the mixer running on medium-high or high speed, begin to very slowly drizzle in the oil. Start

with just a few drops, then increase the speed at which you add the oil as the mixture becomes creamy-looking and the emulsion takes hold. Once you've added about half the oil, add the remaining 1½ teaspoons vinegar, then continue to add the remaining oil. Once all of the oil is added, season with more salt to taste and a few drops of lemon juice, if using. If the mayonnaise seems too thick, mix in a teaspoon or two of cold water to thin. Cover and refrigerate if not using right away. The mayo will thicken as it chills, so you may want to thin it a little more than you would if using immediately.

*If the slight risk of salmonella is a concern for you, use a pasteurized egg yolk.

Homemade flavor in a tub

Don't have time to make your own mayo? You can get the best of both worlds: A mayonnaise that has that homemade feel and flavor with the convenience of a jar. Delouis Fils Fresh Mayonnaise comes in 12-ounce plastic tubs packed to the brim with a velvety smooth, satisfyingly rich mayonnaise that has a sprightly mustard kick and a mildly assertive yet never overpowering egg flavor. Made with nothing other than safflower oil, egg yolks, lemon juice, and Dijon mustard, it's as close as it gets to homemade. Delouis Fils



is available in specialty stores around the country and at most Whole Foods markets (\$5.99 for a 12-ounce tub). Unopened, it lasts for about three months; once opened, it should be consumed within a month. ♦

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What makes beef tender or tough?

With meat, the cut matters as much as how you cook it

BY PETER BARHAM

Some years ago, my mother-in-law served a truly memorable roast dinner. Today, whenever the family gets together, we still try to decide what it was we ate—the meat was served already sliced on the plates, and it was so gray and tough that it had become unidentifiable.

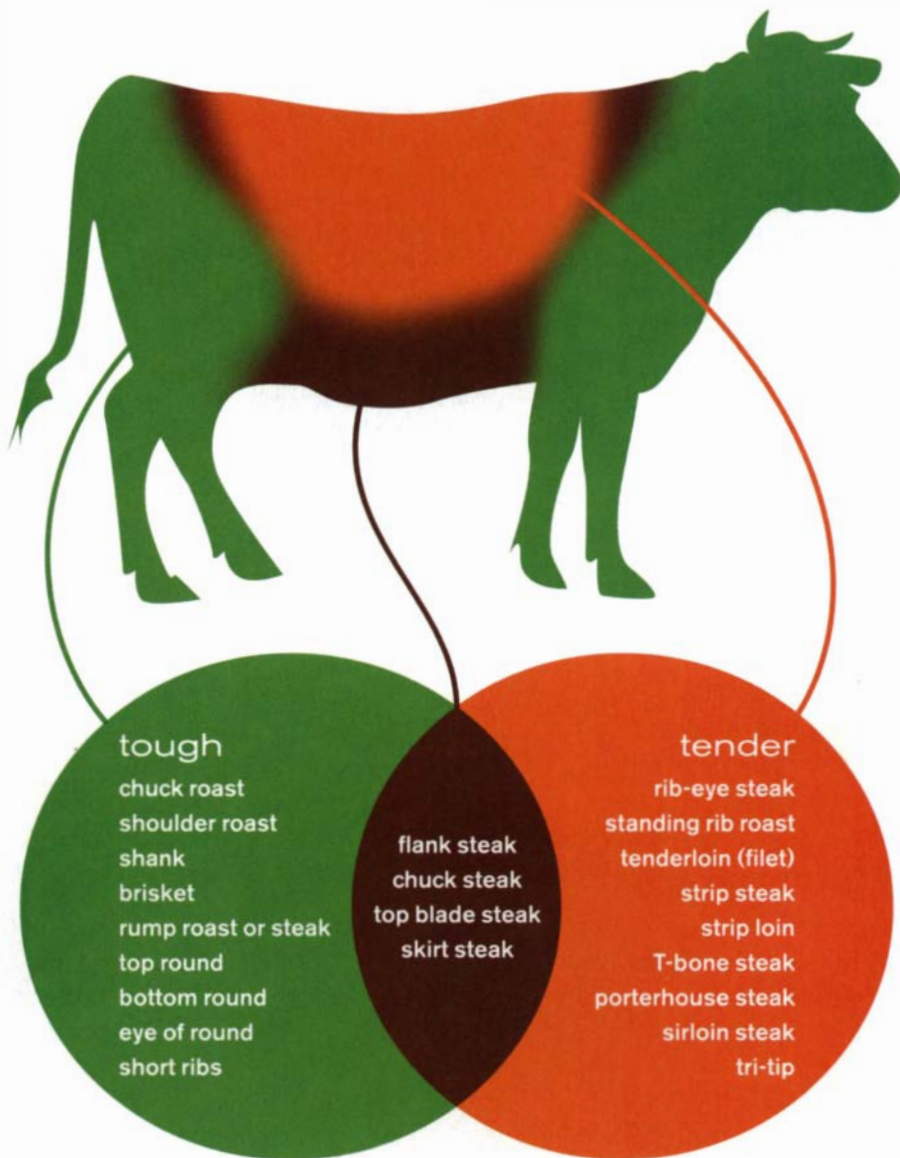
The problem was that the meat had been cooked for so long at such a high temperature that its color, flavor, and texture had been destroyed. To be fair, the cook wasn't entirely to blame for the outcome (this was once a normal way for English housewives to cook meat), but it was a real pity, because such a disaster is easily avoided. The key is to know whether the cut you have is inherently tough or tender and to choose your cooking method accordingly.

Some cuts are naturally tougher than others

All meat—be it beef, pork, lamb, or chicken—consists of muscle, connective tissue, and fat. Most of what you see in a piece of meat is the soft, dense muscle; it's essentially bundles of protein fibers. Connective tissue is the broad term for ligaments, tendons, and the collagen membranes that hold muscle fibers together. Fat can appear in thick layers over muscles and also as fine marbling between muscle fibers. When finely marbled fat melts during cooking, it enhances tenderness and adds succulence.

If you want to know whether a cut of beef is naturally tough or tender, you need to know two things: how much connective tissue the cut contains, and how much exercise the muscle received.

The toughest cuts have a lot of connective tissue and come from a heavily exercised muscle. (Exercise increases the amount of connective tissue within



The anatomy of tough and tender

The diagram above lists some of the most common tough and tender cuts; the cuts listed in the middle aren't exactly tough or tender but somewhere in

between. These are versatile cuts when it comes to cooking, working nicely as a braise but also able to take the high, dry heat of a grill or sauté pan.

the muscles, making them tougher.) The tenderest cuts are those that have very little connective tissue and come from a little-used muscle. (For a list of tough and tender cuts, see the diagram on the facing page.)

So which muscles work the hardest and have the most connective tissue? That depends primarily on where the meat comes from on a steer's body. The muscles that run along the sides of the backbone, for example, don't work particularly hard, so cuts from that area (filet mignon, for instance, and rib-eye, porterhouse, T-bone, and sirloin steaks)

are inherently tender. The large muscles that connect to the hips and shoulders, however, work a lot and have more connective tissue, so meat from those areas (round or rump roasts from the hip, chuck from the shoulder) is generally on the tougher side.

Match the cut to the cooking method

By its very composition, meat poses a challenge to cooks. The more you cook muscle, the more the proteins will firm up, toughen, and dry out. But the longer you cook connective tissue, the more

it softens and becomes edible. To be specific, muscle tends to have the most tender texture between 120° and 160°F. But connective tissue doesn't even start to soften until it hits 160°F, and it needs to reach 200°F to completely break down. By the time connective tissue is becoming edible, the muscle has completely overcooked.

So the trick to getting good results is deciding at the outset what sort of treatment the beef needs. Is it a mostly tender cut that needs to be cooked only long enough to make it safe to eat and develop good flavor? Or is it a mostly tough cut that needs ample time for connective tissue to break down? Every cut has its own particular needs.

Tender cuts with little connective tissue can take high, dry heat. This creates delicious browning on the outside without overheating the muscle inside. Steaks and other small tender cuts take well to quick cooking methods like grilling, pan searing, and frying. Larger cuts like prime rib are good candidates for roasting. (I like to start in a hot oven—just long enough to brown the surface—and then lower the heat for the remaining cooking time to let the heat slowly diffuse through the meat, until it reaches the temperature and color I want.)

Tougher cuts with lots of connective tissue do best with gentle, moist heat and lots of time. Long-cooking stews and braises are ideal for cuts like beef brisket and short ribs (the braising liquid ensures that the meat's temperature hovers at about the boiling point). The slow, low-heat cooking allows connective tissue to break down into soft, silky gelatin, which gives the braise or stew a wonderful, rich mouth-feel. Also, as the collagen between the muscle fibers breaks down, the meat takes on a desirable "falling-apart" texture. At this point, the meat is technically overcooked, but the texture doesn't seem tough or dry because the muscle fibers fall apart easily when chewed, and the dissolved collagen and juices add succulence.

What's going on as beef is cooking?

Cooking beef perfectly takes practice, but a little scientific knowledge can help, too. The box below summarizes the effect of increasing temperature on muscle and connective tissue. The textural changes occur at slightly different temperatures depending on the kind and cut of meat, so use this as a guide only.

how the muscle changes	temp.	textural results & meat color
muscle proteins begin to unfold	100°F	soft to touch and slippery; meat is red
	110°F	
muscle proteins start to coagulate (clump together) and squeeze out some water	120°F	becoming firm and juicy; turning from red to pink
	130°F	
muscle proteins continue to coagulate	140°F	very firm; meat is pink
	150°F	
connective tissues shrink and squeeze juices out of muscles	160°F	meat releases lots of juice; pinkish-brown color
	170°F	
connective tissues begin to dissolve and form gelatin; protein fibers densely packed	180°F	meat quite chewy; shows shrinkage; brownish color
	190°F	
muscle proteins mostly coagulated and water squeezed out of cells	200°F	meat hard and tough; juices flow freely; brownish-gray color
connective tissue dissolved and rapidly turning into gelatin		
all connective tissue broken down		

Peter Barham is a physicist at Bristol University in England. ♦

Tuscan Dinner, p. 34

To test Tony Rosenfeld's Tuscan Grilled Chicken, Sausage & Sage Skewers, we used flat, 18-inch-long skewers from Steven Raichlen's Best of Barbecue line; they sell for \$16.99 at Amazon.com.

One-pound packages of fregola, the Sardinian toasted pasta, are \$6 at GourmetSardinia.com (713-621-6858). If you can't find a crusty, artisan-style loaf of bread for the bruschetta, you can mail-order a wonderful loaf of paesano bread, French mountain bread, or farm bread from Zingermans.com (888-636-8162).

Roasted Potato Salads, p. 50

For roasting potatoes, Joanne Weir uses a rimmed baking sheet, also known as a half sheet pan. They're widely available at kitchenware stores, or visit BakersCatalogue.com (800-827-6836), where they sell for \$17.95.

Fish Cakes, p. 60

A mini ice cream scoop, like the #100 size scoop, \$8.99 at Fantes.com (800-443-2683), is perfect for portioning mini crab, shrimp, and salmon cakes.

For mail-order Dungeness crabs, Tom Douglas highly recommends Mutual Fish in Seattle, Washington (206-322-4368). They sell to retail customers, and they will ship live crabs (priced by the pound). For live blue crabs by the dozen, visit The



Steaks from the Skillet, p. 41

Bruce Aidells's favorite mail-order source for steak is PreferredMeats.com (800-397-6328), in Oakland, California. Other good sources include:

- ❖ NimanRanch.com (866-808-0340)
- ❖ Lobels.com (877-783-4512)
- ❖ Stockyards.com (877-785-9273)
- ❖ AllenBrothers.com (800-957-0111)

For a good-quality cast-iron pan, try LodgeMfg.com, which has a wide selection.

You'll find ready-to-eat chorizo (for the Sweet Pepper-Chorizo Butter) in both supermarkets (check the cheese or deli case) and specialty shops. Online, try Tienda.com (888-472-1022) for a variety of chorizos (from \$5.95 for 7 ounces), as well as pimentón (smoked Spanish paprika, from \$4.95) and jarred Spanish piquillo peppers (from \$8.95).



Chesapeake Crab Connection Company (Ordercrabs.com; 866-509-2722).

Look for Crystal hot sauce (Tom's preferred brand) in your local supermarket, or buy it online from \$1.49 at Amazon.com. The Asian chile pastes sambal oelek (\$6.45 for 7 ounces) and sambal badjak (\$7.95 for 7 ounces) are available through The CMC Company (TheCMCcompany.com; 800-262-2780). You can find star anise (\$1.89 per 3-ounce package) at Oriental Pantry (OrientalPantry.com; 978-264-4576).

Summer Fruit Cakes, p. 66

Parchment (\$6.95 to \$17.95), 9x2-inch cake pans (\$12.95), Microplane grater/zesters (\$17.95), and cooling racks (from \$12.95 for a set of two) are all available at BakersCatalogue.com (800-827-6836).

In Season, p. 16

To cut perfect tomato slices, Ruth Lively recommends using a serrated knife. We like Chroma's tomato knife, which sells for \$47 at CutleryandMore.com. For tomato seeds, look to Tomato Growers Supply (TomatoGrowers.com; 888-478-7333).



Slaws, p. 46

If your food processor doesn't come with a 4mm slicing blade, try CulinaryParts.com (866-727-8435), which carries parts for brands including Cuisinart and KitchenAid.

From Our Test Kitchen, p. 70

Both halloumi (\$7.99 for 8 ounces) and cornichons (\$4.99 per bottle) are available at igourmet.com (877-446-8763); fregola is also sold there (or see the source under Tuscan Dinner at top left.). Well-stocked supermarkets or specialty stores also carry these ingredients.

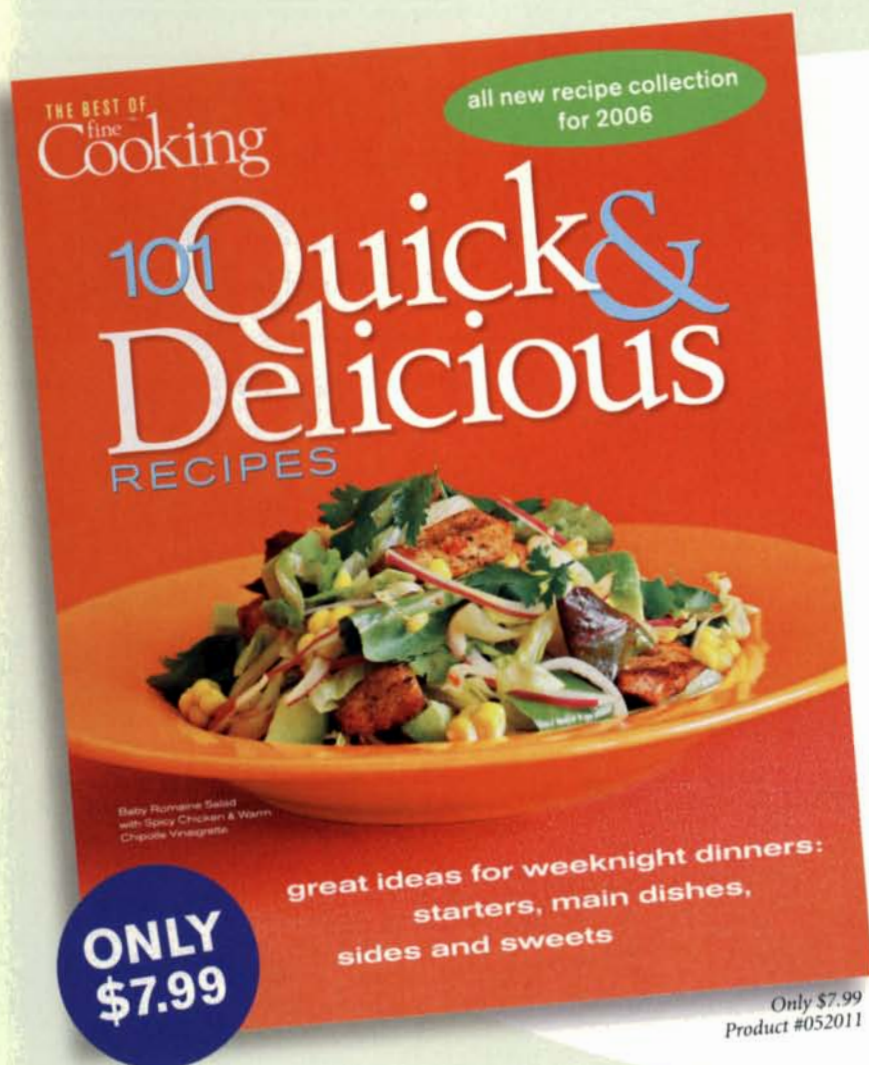
For ready-to-eat chorizo, see "Steaks" above. For sources for live Dungeness or blue crabs, see "Fish Cakes" at far left.

Back Cover

For a good tomato knife, see the source under "In Season" at left.

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Recipe	Page	Calories		Protein	Carb	Fats (g)				Chol.	Sodium	Fiber	Notes
		total	from fat	(g)	(g)	total	sat	mono	poly	(mg)	(mg)	(g)	
Letters	10												
Garlicky Cherry Tomato Gratin		120	70	2	11	7	1	5	1	0	240	2	based on 6 servings
In Season	16												
Rustic Beefsteak Tomato Tart		270	160	5	22	18	9	6	1	35	230	2	based on 10 servings
A Taste of Tuscany	34												
Bruschetta w/ Herbed Tomatoes		150	70	3	16	8	1	5	1	0	450	1	based on 8 servings
Rosemary-Garlic Oil		120	120	0	0	14	2	10	1.5	0	0	0	per 1 Tbs.
Tuscan Grilled Chicken, Sausage & Sage Skewers		510	360	34	2	40	10	22	6	120	750	0	based on 8 servings
Spinach & Grilled Radicchio Salad		180	140	4	5	16	4	9	1.5	10	510	1	based on 8 servings
Fregola w/ Grill-Marinated Red Peppers & Zucchini		260	90	7	37	10	1.5	7	1.5	0	500	3	based on 8 servings
Grilled Fresh Figs w/ Ice Cream & Honey		230	70	2	41	7	3.5	2.5	1	20	40	1	based on 8 servings
Skillet Steak	41												
Filet Steaks w/ an Irish Whisky & Cream Pan Sauce		580	360	42	3	41	19	15	1.5	185	450	0	based on 4 servings, w/o oil
New York Strip Steak		210	90	28	0	10	4	4	0	75	350	0	based on 4 servings, w/o oil
Sweet Pepper-Chorizo Butter		60	60	1	1	6	3.5	2	0	15	65	0	per 1 Tbs.
Star Anise & Rosemary Rib-Eye Steak		190	100	21	0	11	4	5	0	50	420	0	based on 6 servings, w/o oil
Slaws	46												
Buttermilk & Herb Cole Slaw		100	60	2	9	7	1	5	1	0	640	3	based on 8 servings
Mexican-Style Slaw w/ Jicama, Cilantro & Lime		130	80	2	14	8	1	0	0	5	650	6	based on 8 servings
Asian-Style Slaw w/ Green Mango		180	80	5	21	9	1.5	4	3.5	0	980	4	based on 6 servings
Roasted Potato Salads	50												
Simple Roasted Potatoes		170	60	3	24	7	1	5	1	0	200	3	based on 6 servings
Roasted Potato Salad w/ Bell Peppers, Roasted Corn, Tomato		290	150	4	32	17	2.5	12	2	0	340	4	based on 6 servings
Roasted Potato Salad w/ Shaved Fennel & Salsa Verde		270	140	4	29	16	2	12	2	0	490	4	based on 6 servings
Roasted Potato Salad w/ Crispy Prosciutto & Vinaigrette		300	160	6	30	18	2.5	12	1.5	5	890	3	based on 6 servings
Roasted Potato Salad w/ Green Beans, Feta & Mint		340	200	7	29	22	5	14	2	15	690	4	based on 6 servings
Ratatouille	54												
Sautéed Ratatouille		200	140	3	15	16	2	11	2	0	290	5	based on 8 servings
Roasted Ratatouille		430	310	6	29	35	5	25	4	0	450	10	based on 4 servings
Simple Provençal Vegetable Tart		70	45	3	4	5	1.5	2.5	0	105	270	1	based on 8 servings
White Bean & Ratatouille Gratin		220	100	6	24	11	2	7	1.5	0	420	6	based on 4 servings
Lemonade	58												
Pink Lemonade		170	0	0	45	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	based on 8 servings
Crab, Shrimp & Salmon	60												
Shrimp & Scallop Cakes		290	140	27	7	15	2.5	7	5	140	420	1	4 servings, w/o sauce
Gingered Soy Sauce		20	0	1	4	0	0	0	0	0	670	0	per 1 Tbs.
Etta's New Crab Cakes		550	330	26	27	37	15	15	3.5	195	930	2	4 servings, w/o sauce
Red-Eye Cocktail Sauce		15	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	150	0	per 1 Tbs.
Creole Salmon Cakes		270	150	28	1	17	2.5	8	4	125	580	1	4 servings, w/o garnishes
Giardiniera Relish		160	140	1	6	15	2	11	1.5	0	510	2	per ½ cup
Summer Fruit Cakes	66												
Gingery Plum Cake		270	90	4	40	11	7	2	0	70	150	1	based on 10 servings
Raspberry-Peach Cake		240	70	4	37	8	5	2.5	0	60	150	1	based on 10 servings
Blueberry-Lemon Cornmeal Cake		240	70	4	39	8	5	2	0	60	160	1	based on 10 servings
From Our Test Kitchen	70												
Vietnamese Beef Noodle Soup w/ Fresh Herbs		410	90	25	54	10	3.5	4.5	1	35	1540	2	based on 4 servings
Pomegranate Sangria Gelatin		160	0	2	32	0	0	0	0	0	15	1	based on 6 servings
Tasting Panel	76												
Hand-Mixer Mayonnaise		130	130	0	0	14	1	8	4	15	170	0	per 1 Tbs.
Quick & Delicious	86c												
Grilled Chicken w/ Tomato, Lime & Cilantro Salsa		130	60	14	4	7	1	4.5	1	35	190	1	based on 8 servings
Grilled Steak Kebab Pitas w/ Ginger & Garlic Dressing		400	170	20	35	19	4	12	2	35	540	2	based on 8 servings w/8 pitas
Smoked Salmon & Pea Fritters w/ Scallion Sour Cream		160	110	4	9	12	3	4.5	4	35	250	1	per 1 Fritter
Goat Cheese, Lemon & Chive Turnovers		60	35	3	2	4	2	1.5	0	5	130	0	per 1 Turnover
Bruschetta w/ Grilled Eggplant & Vidalia Onion		230	110	4	26	13	4.5	7	1	20	380	4	based on 8 servings
Pan-Fried Halloumi w/ Fennel, Olive & Mint Compote		210	160	9	5	18	8	6	1	25	560	1	based on 6 servings
Shrimp & Cannellini Salad w/ Tarragon Vinaigrette		190	110	6	13	12	1.5	8	1.5	20	360	4	based on 6 servings
Back Cover													
Grilled Sourdough Panzanella		370	180	7	40	20	3	14	2.5	0	760	4	based on 6 servings

The nutritional analyses have been calculated by a registered dietitian at Nutritional Solutions in Melville, New York. When a recipe gives a choice of ingredients, the first choice is the one used in the

calculations. Optional ingredients and those listed without a specific quantity are not included. When a range of ingredient amounts or servings is given, the smaller amount or portion is used. When the

quantity of salt and pepper aren't specified, the analysis is based on ¼ teaspoon salt and ½ teaspoon pepper per serving for entrées, and ½ teaspoon salt and ¼ teaspoon pepper per serving for side dishes.

A man in a tan shirt and brown vest stands in a vineyard, holding a falcon on his gloved hand. Another falcon is perched on his shoulder. The background shows rows of grapevines under a clear blue sky.

**"To make great tasting wines, we watch
our vineyards like, well, these guys."**

— J.J. Gonsalves, vineyard manager, Woodbridge Winery

www.woodbridgewines.com

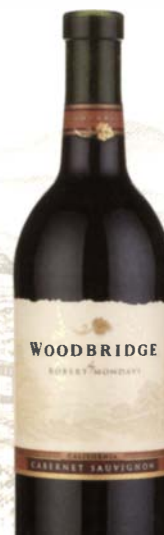
When Robert Mondavi founded Woodbridge twenty-seven years ago, he wanted to make wine in harmony with the environment. That's why we build birdhouses for the feathered friends that watch over our vineyards. Working with nature gives us award-winning wines, like our bold, smooth Cabernet Sauvignon. Think we're overprotective? Anything less is for the birds.



WOODBRIDGE

ROBERT MONDAVI

TASTE OUR SMALL WINERY TRADITION.™



A Perfect Marriage of Bread & Tomatoes



If you've never had a bread salad, you're missing out on a great way to both use up leftover bread and showcase summer tomatoes. Bread salads are common in the Mediterranean and the Middle East, where cooks use stale bread as the primary ingredient. In this Italian version, called panzanella, we char the bread on the grill for added flavor.

See p. 16 for more ideas for ripe summer tomatoes.



tool tip: The sharp edge of a stainless-steel serrated knife cuts through tomatoes quickly and easily. If you like, try a knife specifically made for slicing tomatoes, such as the one pictured here. For sources, see p. 80.

Grilled Sourdough Panzanella

Yields about 6 cups; serves four to six.

If you don't feel like grilling the bread, you can toast it in a grill pan or under a low broiler.

- 4 ½-inch-thick slices (about 8 ounces) from the center of a round sourdough loaf (a boule)**
- ½ cup extra-virgin olive oil**
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper**
- 1 small shallot, sliced into thin rings**
- 3 tablespoons red-wine vinegar**
- 1 small clove garlic, coarsely chopped**
- 1½ pounds ripe, meaty tomatoes, cut into ½-inch dice (about 3½ cups)**
- 1 small English cucumber, seeded and cut into ½-inch dice (about 1½ cups)**
- 3 tablespoons chopped fresh basil**
- 3 tablespoons chopped fresh mint**
- 2 tablespoons capers, drained and rinsed**

¼ cup of the oil and season it with ¼ teaspoon kosher salt and a few grinds of pepper. Grill the bread on both sides, checking frequently, until nicely browned, 3 to 4 minutes per side. When the bread is cool enough to handle, cut it into ½-inch cubes.

In a small bowl, soak the shallot in the vinegar for 10 minutes. With a slotted spoon, transfer the shallot to a large bowl, reserving the vinegar. Sprinkle the garlic with ¼ teaspoon kosher salt and mash it into a paste on a cutting board with the side of a chef's knife. Whisk the mashed garlic, the remaining ¼ cup olive oil, ¼ teaspoon kosher salt, and ⅛ teaspoon pepper into the reserved vinegar.

Toss the bread cubes, tomatoes, cucumber, basil, mint, capers, and vinaigrette in the bowl with the shallot. Season the panzanella to taste with kosher salt and pepper and serve.

Heat a gas grill with all burners on medium. Brush the bread with

—Allison Ehri, test kitchen associate ♦

BY JESSICA BARD

Meant for sharing



"Small plates" have popped up on tapas-style restaurant menus all over the country. But this style of dining is perfect for casual entertaining at home, too—just make a few of the recipes here, set them out on serving platters, and they'll add up to a light (and quick-to-make) meal for company. If I have the grill going, I make the bruschetta, the grilled chipotle chicken, and the kebab sandwiches. Add a couple of bottles of wine, and I have a relaxed summertime supper that lets my guests nibble as they like. Many of these recipes also work beautifully on their own as hors d'oeuvres, first courses, or light lunches. Try the fritters as a quick snack, the halloumi as an appetizer, or the shrimp and bean salad for brunch.



Grilled Chicken with Tomato, Lime & Cilantro Salsa

Serves four as a main course, six to eight as a "small plate."

- 2 cups seeded, diced ripe tomatoes (2 to 3 medium tomatoes)**
- ½ cup finely chopped fresh cilantro**
- 4 scallions (white and green parts), thinly sliced**
- 2 Tbs. fresh lime juice**
- 3 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil**
- 1½ to 2 tsp. granulated sugar**
- Finely grated zest of 1 lime (about 1 tsp.)**
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper**
- 2 tsp. minced chipotle (from a can of chipotles in adobo sauce)**
- 4 boneless, skinless chicken breast halves (1½ to 2 lb.)**

Prepare a medium-hot grill fire.

In a medium bowl, combine the tomatoes, cilantro, scallions, lime juice, 1 Tbs. of the oil, 1½ tsp. of the sugar, and the lime zest. If your tomatoes aren't perfectly ripe and sweet, add the remaining ½ tsp. sugar. Season with ½ tsp. kosher salt and ¼ tsp. pepper, or to taste.

In another medium bowl, mix the chipotle, the remaining 2 Tbs. oil, ½ tsp. kosher salt, and ¼ tsp. pepper.

Trim the chicken. If the tenderloins are still attached, remove them and save for an-

other use. Use the flat side of a meat mallet to pound each chicken breast to an even ½-inch thickness. Add the chicken to the chipotle mixture and toss well to coat.

When the grill is ready, lay the chicken on the hot grill grates and cook, covered, until the chicken has grill marks and the edges turn opaque, 2 to 3 minutes. Flip the breasts and continue to cook until the chicken is cooked through, 2 to 3 minutes more.

Transfer the chicken to a clean cutting board and let rest for 5 minutes. Slice each breast crosswise on the diagonal into ½-inch-thick slices. Arrange the chicken on a platter and top with the salsa.

Tip: This dish is also delicious served cold or at room temperature over salad greens. You can also make it ahead: Grill the chicken, let it cool for 20 minutes, refrigerate (for up to 8 hours), and slice just before serving with the salsa. The salsa ingredients may be prepared up to 2 hours ahead, but mix them together just before serving.



Grilled Steak Kebab Pitas with Ginger & Garlic Dressing

Serves four as a main course, six to eight as a "small plate."

- ½ cup extra-virgin olive oil; more for brushing**
- 1 Tbs. finely grated ginger**
- 1 Tbs. green Tabasco or other jalapeño hot sauce**
- 2 tsp. cider vinegar**
- 1 small to medium clove garlic, finely grated or minced**
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper**
- 1½ to 1¾ lb. 1-inch-thick boneless beef strip steaks (2 to 3 steaks), trimmed and cut into 1-inch cubes**
- 6 to 8 bamboo skewers (at least 8 inches long), soaked in water for at least 20 minutes**
- 1 large red bell pepper, cored and cut into 1¼- to 1½-inch squares**
- 6 to 8 pita breads, preferably pocketless**
- 2 cups shredded lettuce, preferably a crisp variety like iceberg or romaine**

Prepare a medium-hot grill fire.

In a 1-cup liquid measuring cup, whisk the ½ cup oil with the ginger, Tabasco, vinegar, garlic, ¼ tsp. kosher salt, and ¼ tsp. pepper.

Thread four cubes of meat onto each skewer, inserting a red pepper square between the cubes. (You may not need all the skewers.) Brush the kebabs with oil and sprinkle lightly with salt and pepper.

Just before grilling, lightly oil the grill grates. Set the kebabs on the grill and cook, with the lid closed, turning every 2 minutes, 4 to 6 minutes total for medium rare. Warm the pitas on the grill.

To serve, slide each kebab off its skewer into a pita. Top each with some of the lettuce. Whisk the dressing to recombine and drizzle over the meat and vegetables.



Smoked Salmon & Pea Fritters with Scallion Sour Cream

Yields about 18 fritters.

- 1 cup sour cream**
- 1 bunch scallions, thinly sliced (white and green parts kept separate)**
- 2 Tbs. capers, drained, rinsed, and roughly chopped**
- 2 large eggs**
- ¾ cup whole milk**
- ¼ lb. smoked salmon, cut into ¼-inch dice (about ¾ cup)**
- 1 cup frozen peas (about 5 oz.)**
- 5½ oz. (1¼ cups) all-purpose flour**
- 2 tsp. baking powder**
- Kosher salt**
- ¼ tsp. ground white pepper**
- 1½ cups vegetable oil**

Position a rack in the center of the oven and heat the oven to 200°F.

In a medium bowl, mix the sour cream with the scallion greens and capers.

In a large bowl, whisk the eggs until frothy. Whisk in the milk. Stir in the salmon, peas, and the white parts of the scallions. Add the flour, baking powder, ½ tsp. kosher salt, and the white pepper to the egg mixture and whisk until well combined.

Pour the oil into a 10-inch skillet that's 2 inches deep (the oil should be about ½ inch deep) and heat over medium-high heat until shimmering hot. (A good way to tell if the oil is hot enough is to drop a 1-inch cube of bread in the oil; it should turn golden brown in about 30 seconds.) Add the batter to the oil one heaping tablespoon at a time. Cook the fritters in batches of six (don't crowd the pan) until golden brown on the first side, 2 to 3 minutes. Using a slotted spatula or spoon, turn and cook until the second side is golden brown, about 2 minutes. Transfer the fritters to a rimmed baking dish lined with paper towels and keep warm in the oven. Continue to cook the remaining fritters. Serve hot with the scallion sour cream.



Goat Cheese, Lemon & Chive Turnovers

Yields 9 turnovers.

4 oz. fresh goat cheese
(about $\frac{1}{2}$ cup), at room temperature
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup thinly sliced fresh chives
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup minced yellow onion
1 tsp. finely grated lemon zest
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
Flour for dusting
1 sheet frozen puff pastry, thawed overnight in the refrigerator

Position a rack in the center of the oven and heat the oven to 400°F.

In a medium bowl, mash the goat cheese with a fork. Add the chives, onion, lemon zest, $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. kosher salt, and $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. pepper. Stir until well combined.

On a lightly floured surface, unfold the pastry sheet and lightly dust with flour. Use a rolling pin to roll the sheet into a 12-inch square. Cut the dough into 9 squares. Put equal amounts of the filling (about 1 Tbs.) onto the center of each

square. Moisten the edges of a square with a fingertip dipped in water. Fold the dough over to form a triangle, gently pressing to remove air pockets around the filling and pressing the edges of the dough together. Use the tines of a fork to crimp and seal the edges of the turnover. Repeat this process with the other dough squares.

Arrange the turnovers on a cookie sheet and bake until the turnovers are puffed and golden all over, 15 to 18 minutes. Let them cool on a rack for a few minutes and serve warm.

Tip: These savory turnovers may be filled and shaped up to 2 hours ahead of cooking. Cover tightly with plastic wrap or brush with melted butter before refrigerating.



Bruschetta with Grilled Eggplant & Vidalia Onion

Serves six to eight as an appetizer or "small plate."

1 medium eggplant (1 to 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ lb.)
1 medium-large (about 12-oz.) Vidalia onion (or other sweet variety, like Texas Sweet or Walla Walla)
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup heavy cream
4 cloves garlic, thinly sliced
2 tsp. fresh thyme leaves, chopped
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup extra-virgin olive oil; more for the bread
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup freshly grated Parmigiano-Reggiano
About $\frac{1}{2}$ baguette, sliced diagonally into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch-thick slices

Prepare a medium-hot grill fire.

Trim off $\frac{1}{2}$ inch from the top and bottom of the eggplant. Cut the eggplant lengthwise into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch-thick slices. Cut the onion crosswise into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch-thick slices. To keep the rings together, insert toothpicks or small skewers horizontally through the rings of each slice.

In a small saucepan over medium-high heat, bring the cream, garlic, and thyme to a boil. Reduce the heat to medium and simmer gently until the cream has reduced by half, 3 to 5 minutes. Remove from the heat.

When the grill is ready, brush both sides of the eggplant and onion slices with the $\frac{1}{4}$ cup olive oil. Arrange the vegetables on the grill and cook with the lid closed until the first sides have started to soften and get grill marks, 2 to 3 minutes for the eggplant and 5 to 6 minutes for the onion. Flip and cook the second sides with the lid closed until the eggplant is tender and the onion is nicely charred but not necessarily fully tender, 2 to 3 minutes more for the eggplant and 5 to 6 minutes more for the onion. Transfer the eggplant to a cutting board and sprinkle with $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. kosher salt and $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. pepper. Transfer the onion to a large sheet of foil, stack the slices, wrap tightly, and let rest until residual heat has softened the onion, about 5 minutes.

Remove the skewers from the onion slices. Coarsely chop the eggplant and onion and combine in a medium bowl. Add the cream mixture and the Parmigiano; stir to combine. Taste and add salt and pepper as needed. Brush the bread slices on both sides with oil and grill until lightly golden brown, 30 seconds to 1 minute per side. Top each slice with a generous dollop of the eggplant mixture.



Pan-Fried Halloumi with Fennel, Olive & Mint Compote

Serves four to six as an appetizer or "small plate."

3 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil
½ medium fennel bulb, cored and cut into ¼-inch dice (about 1¼ cups)
½ medium yellow onion, cut into ¼-inch dice (about ¾ cup)
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
12 pitted Kalamata olives, slivered (about ⅓ cup)
1 tsp. finely grated lemon zest
⅓ cup minced fresh mint
1 8-oz. package halloumi cheese, cut into ¼- to ⅜-inch-thick slices (see From Our Test Kitchen, p. 70, for more about halloumi)

Heat 2 Tbs. of the oil in a heavy, 10-inch sauté pan over medium heat until hot. Add the fennel and onions and cook gently, stirring occasionally, until the vegetables begin to soften (but don't let them brown), 4 to 5 minutes. Reduce the heat to medium low, add ¼ tsp. kosher salt and ¼ tsp. pepper and

continue to cook until the vegetables soften completely, another 3 to 5 minutes. Turn the heat to low and stir in the olives, lemon zest, mint, and the remaining 1 Tbs. oil. Remove from the heat and cover to keep warm.

Set a large (preferably 12-inch) nonstick skillet over medium-high heat (no oil is necessary) until hot, about 1 minute. Working in batches if necessary to avoid crowding the pan, cook the halloumi until golden in spots, about 2 minutes. Flip and cook until the second side of each slice is golden, about 2 minutes more. Reduce the heat as needed if the halloumi is browning too fast.

Shingle the halloumi on a serving platter. Stir the compote and spoon half of it over the halloumi. Serve immediately with the remaining compote on the side.

Serving suggestion:

Serve with slices of crusty bread warmed in the oven.



Shrimp & Cannellini Salad with Tarragon Vinaigrette

Serves four as a main course, six as an appetizer or "small plate."

2 Tbs. sherry vinegar
1 Tbs. Dijon mustard
1 Tbs. minced fresh tarragon
1 tsp. minced garlic
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
5 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil
1 15- or 16-oz. can cannellini beans, rinsed and drained
1 medium ripe tomato, cut into medium dice (about 1 cup)
1 large shallot, sliced thinly into rings (about ¼ cup)
12 jumbo shrimp (16 to 20 count), peeled and deveined
1 medium head red-leaf lettuce (or a lettuce mix), washed, dried, and torn into bite-size pieces (about 8 cups)

In a medium bowl, mix the sherry vinegar with the mustard, tarragon, garlic, and ¼ tsp. each kosher salt

and pepper. Slowly whisk in 4 Tbs. of the oil.

In a large bowl, combine the beans, tomato, and shallot. Add 3 Tbs. of the vinaigrette and stir gently to combine.

Toss the shrimp with the remaining 1 Tbs. oil and season with salt and a few grinds pepper. Heat a grill pan over high heat and then cook the shrimp until opaque throughout, 3 to 4 minutes per side.

Toss the lettuce with half of the remaining vinaigrette (add more to taste). For individual servings, portion the lettuce among the serving plates. Spoon the beans on top of the greens and top each salad with two or three shrimp, depending on how many servings you're making. To serve buffet style, arrange a layer of lettuce, the beans, and then the shrimp. Serve immediately.